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The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Dennis J. Bennett:

NEUROTIC MINISTERS?

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MARCH, 1953

By Dennis J. Bennett

SHOULD MINISTERS

SOME churches are requiring psychological examinations for ministerial candidates. This is logical and commendable, but we ask: Is a neurotic or maladjusted person necessarily unfit to be a pastor? Or, to put it succinctly: Is neurosis an impediment to Orders?

What is neurosis? Without trying to sum up the many shades of opinion and definition, we may say that a neurotic person has more difficulty dealing with ordinary problems and situations than does a "normal" person. A famous psychologist has defined a neurotic as one who has a "difficulty in living." The neurotic person has to plow his way by main force and courage through situations which would hold no difficulty or hazard at all to the ordinary soul. Due to complexes or processes buried in his psyche, beyond his conscious control, he is made supersensitive or irrationally fearful where there is neither need for fear nor reason to be hurt. Haunted by unreasonable feelings of insecurity, he may be abnormally critical of his own actions. He may have distressing physical symptoms that impede his work. His trouble is analogous to the person whose eyesight or hearing is impaired, or who walks painfully due to injury or congenital defect.

That such things *could* get in the way of a minister's work is clear enough, but whether they *would* in fact do so depends on factors beyond the reach of the psychiatrist to measure or predict. Maladjustment or neurosis is by definition not subject to the will any more than lameness or deafness is voluntary. We must here distinguish between the person himself: the chooser—the seat of free will—and the mind-body through which he contacts and deals with his environment, interwoven though they may be. It is what a man *wills* to do with his limitations, mental or physical, that is important. Thus we have, for example, "guilt *feelings*" as neurotic and irrational symptoms, and true guilt, which is perverse and intentional wrong choice of the will. The neurosis itself is largely beyond the reach of the will, but the will may choose to deal with the neurosis in either a constructive or destructive manner.

A man may enjoy and exploit his neurosis, and use it as an excuse for self-indulgence; or he may attempt in every way (including psychological therapy) to overcome it. He may be effective in spite of his neurosis; through it he may learn to understand the nature of God and the meaning of suffering. Similarly, a blind person may lapse into beggary, using his defect as an excuse, or he may, by will power and determination, more than compensate for his lack of sight. If a man is aware of his limitations, and has sought to understand them—which a candidate for the Christian ministry would presumably have done—, he knows, even though he may not be able to get rid of his defects, where they begin and end, and where they will affect his work. In the course of compensating for them, he may well become a greater person and far more effective minister than a person who is "normal." Helen Keller, instead of sinking under the overwhelming limitations of her physical defects, used them as a path to greatness of soul and became one of the radiant figures of our time.

A Path to the Soul

Does not church history bear this out? How many of the giants of the church could we call "well adjusted"? What would Freud say to the sex attitude of St. Augustine of Hippo? What about the abnormal fears of John Bunyan? Have you read George Fox's *Journal* lately? Was St. Francis of Assisi normal when he wedded the Lady Poverty? Or when he received the Stigmata? What about St. Paul, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Teresa, St. Catherine? What about the great Old Testament figures: Ezekiel with his catatonic trances, Jeremiah and his "persecution complexes," the prophets and their general misanthropic pattern?

It is easy for the psychological biographer, ignoring the field of the spirit and the reality of God in history, to dismiss these and many other examples as "hysterical personalities." Their neurotic and even psychotic symptoms are clear enough! By a similar process of reasoning, we may dismiss as a neurotic delusion with a frankly paranoid bias the whole Judeo-Christian notion of a God whose will may be discovered in man's history. But if we accept God-in-history we may well ask whether the maladjusted are not better equipped to serve and understand him? Is it not possible that God may be able to work with such

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An article which should be read by every pastor, denominational leader and theological faculty member

BE NEUROTIC?

a person while he cannot *reach* the "well adjusted"?

What William James called the religion of healthy-mindedness may be the psychological counterpart of the physical culture enthusiast with his rippling muscles, his animal spirits and his overweening confidence in his own physical ability to meet any and all situations. A startling number of great men have been ill or defective in body, as well as maladjusted mentally. Is not this another illustration of the truth of Arnold Toynbee's thesis that growth and development in any field are sparked by opposition and difficulty?

The Fellowship of Suffering

Whether or not a person manages to conquer his maladjustments in such a manner as to become spiritually great, his experience and self-knowledge give him an understanding of the difficulties of others that is invaluable in counseling and pastoral work. I am aware of many neurotic strands in my own make-up, yet during my ministry my own "difficulty in living" has on a number of occasions given me a rapport with a person I was counseling that I could not possibly have achieved except through experience. There is no substitute for the fellowship of sufferings.

What would happen to the Christian ministry if all branches of the church were to insist on "good adjustment" as prerequisite to ordination? The other week a psychiatrist friend remarked to me: "You know, I don't think I would want to live in a world where everyone was perfectly adjusted." I agree with him. I'm quite sure I wouldn't want a minister or priest who was perfectly adjusted! Perfect adjustment has little to do with sanctity. Indeed, I am quite sure that the devil himself, in addition to being a gentleman, is also perfectly adjusted!

After all, the psychiatrist's summation, logical though it may be, is only a description of the state of the apparatus. The springs of motivation and purpose, the determination of the will, the amount of control which the person has over his difficulties —these are hard to measure, yet they are the criteria by which a man's fitness should be judged. Here is one who is abnormally afraid of heights, yet he defies his own irrational fear and climbs a tree to rescue a child's pet. To the observer it is nothing, but the growth of that man's personality is no less real than if he had plunged into a boiling torrent to rescue a drowning person.

It is not whether a man has neurotic patterns in his personality that fits or unfits him for the ministry; it is what he is doing about them or with them. Does he acknowledge them, and have insight into them? Can he be objective enough about them to use them in his own counseling? Is he using his limitations as occasions for spiritual growth?

Another important lesson which a person can learn from his own psychological difficulties is that man is powerless of himself to help himself. Just as the somatically healthy person has infinite confidence in the power of brute force to meet any situation, so the psychologically healthy person has overweening confidence in his own strength to meet the enemies of the soul. A psychologically healthy person is likely to be a Pelagian. In fact, may we not guess what the psychiatric comparison would be between the balanced, rational, well-adjusted Pelagius and the neurotic, irrational, maladjusted Augustine with his gloomy assertions of human weakness? Yet time and again, when the airy castles of the Pelagian Utopias have come crushing down, it has been the followers of Augustine who have pointed the true course for humanity, recalling mankind to common sense and a real understanding of his place in the creation and of his relationship to God.

The person with psychological problems knows that to attempt to handle those problems with the unaided human will is to imitate Kipling's man "standing at the gate with a rotten stick to turn bulls." He knows that man can only cry out to God for help when he is really face to face with the powers of darkness.

Too Much Self-Confidence

The Apostle Paul wrote in great jubilation of heart: "But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are" (I. Cor. 1:27-28). If this were a sermon, my text also would be from Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The key to the whole thing lies here. The successes of the world are built on human strength, but they do not last. *The successes of God are built on human weakness and they are eternal, because they rest on God's strength, and not on man's.*

The only criterion the psychiatrist has, quite naturally, is not Christian man—redeemed man—but self-centered man—*sinful* man. Sinful or self-

centered man is "well adjusted" when there is a balance between the demands of self and the demands of other selves, when his environment does not demand more of him than he is willing to give, and when he does not demand more of his environment than is available to him without entering aggressive relations with other selves. He is thrown into maladjustment when this balance is tipped: either by the demands of other selves exceeding what he is willing to give, or by his own self demanding more of his environment than is available there—as might come about through the presence of complexes in the subconscious. Once arrived in this state of unbalance or maladjustment, he must either be taught, through counseling and psychotherapy (perhaps aided by physical therapy, shock, etc.), to readjust the balance between his psychological supply-and-demand or he will break down and become seriously psychoneurotic.

But that is self-centered man—man without God. This criterion of adjustment gives us no way to account for Francis of Assisi, John Bunyan, St. Paul. Their lives were violently out of balance, for they demanded nothing, and were ready to give everything. Why? Because they had ceased to be self-centered, and had begun to be God-centered. They had found the new orientation—"Their lives were hid with Christ in God." Their lives shared in the great systole and diastole by which God's grace goes out in unearned love to his creation and returns in freely given adoration to him who is the beginning and end. Conflicts between self and environment, or unbalances there, ceased to have power over them, for they had arrived at a true relation to all things.

Why is it that neurotic patterns and tendencies often are seen in the lives of great men and women of religion, and yet do not seem to hamper them or render their work invalid? Because, and I say this with caution yet assurance, only the person who has *passed through* maladjustment in his human relations can discover the greater adjustment—the relating of man's life to God. The man or woman who is "well adjusted," by the psychiatric criterion, must first be shaken out of his or her complacency, by conflict either from without or from within. Until this has happened he will have no motivation to reach out for God. This is what is really meant by the old phrase "conviction of sin." The "neurotic personality of our time" is the great missionary opportunity of the church! "Maladjusted" man is man on pilgrimage to the City of God, whether he knows it or not, and it is up to the servants of Christ and his church to see that the pilgrims are not lost on the way.

I maintain that the churches should not ask of a candidate for the ministry, "Are you neurotic? Are you maladjusted?" but rather: "Is your life hid with Christ in God? Have you discovered, or begun to discover what the true adjustment of life is? Do you know where real strength comes from? Do you still suffer from the age-old delusion of human self-sufficiency?" For it is the latter that unfits a man to be a servant and builder of the Kingdom of God.

Three Sonnets

By Dale S. Bringman, Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

On His Birth

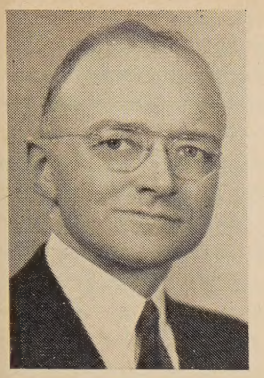
FAIR STAR! Bright, sparkling harbinger on high,
Your wondrous beauty, dazzling to behold
This midnight dawn, floods forth in gorgeous gold
Rejoicing, tells tonight that God is nigh.
Such perfect joy as angels downward fly,
To us the matchless message now unfold.
To all the sweetest story ever told,
For God's own Son is welcomed from the sky.
Shepherds near by are guided by that light,
As are three wise men from the East afar,
Who bring their gifts to Christ on Mary's breast.
The years steal onward passing in swift flight,
But men are wise who follow still Christ's star
In fervent faith, then give to him their best.

On His Death

LOVE's sweetness showers forth 'neath dark'ning skies,
As crosses crude crown grace-strewn Calvary.
The Son of God, face drawn from agony,
In mighty mercy lifts his tear-stained eyes.
In calm majestic anguish Godward cries,
"Forgive them, Father, for their tyranny!"
A downward glance in sweet, still sympathy,
Then, gasping, twists, bows low his head and dies.
The crowd—confused, afraid—gaze at the sight,
And one by one believe in Christ or doubt.
One look at him removes the middle way.
The Savior still looks down from heav'nly height,
And one by one we still believe or doubt,
Scorn still the Christ, or reverently obey.

On His Resurrection

O SPOTLESS SOUL! Sad sequel to it all
Is death's cold chill within a stone-sealed grave
Devout disciples, trusting you to save
Were forced to watch you drink the bitter gall.
Hark now! An angel answers Mary's call,
"He is not here!" This sinless one who gave
His life to loose death's grip on each as slave
Has risen, praise the Lord with glad enthrall!
Oh foolish self! To think that such as he
Should ever die, o'ercome by sin's sharp sword.
Rejoice, my soul, for death has lost its sting.
Strange sadness that we always faithless be
Like changing seasons, doubt a living Lord.
Wild winter's at its worst before sweet spring.



Easter According to James

By Roy M. Pearson

Luke 24:1-12

THOSE days are so long ago that sometimes I have been afraid I would forget them altogether. The Romans ruled the country then, and of their customs and their ways there is so little in the world today that I have nothing to remind me of the life I used to know. We lived in Nazareth, my family and I. We occupied a house close by the village well, and great numbers of the people came to the shop my father built beside our home. Sometimes they bought the benches and the tables which my father made, and sometimes they did nothing but discuss the day's events with him and with themselves. But always there was someone in the shop with something on his mind, and little ever happened anywhere which we did not soon hear about.

Ours was a busy household. There was Joseph my father, and Mary my mother, and then the five boys and the two girls. Jesus was, of course, the oldest of the children, and I, James, came next. Joses followed me, and after him in order came Rebecca, Juda, Deborah and Simon.

My father was a quiet man, kindly, slow and steady. When he smoothed the roughness from a piece of wood it was as if he thought the wood could feel him working on it, as if the wood deserved respect for what it was and yet would be, as if the wood and he were partners in the enterprise together. There was that gentleness about him in his life with other people, too. His words were few, but always well considered. He never seemed to be disturbed or angry. He spoke of God no more than other men might speak of him, but when he used the name at all you felt he talked about a being he had seen and known himself. When Jesus chose a word from earth to designate the God almighty and eternal, it is not strange that he should pick out "Father." In that at least, we all agreed with him; for anything we hoped to find in God we often felt that we had found already in the man who gave our lives so much of happiness, security and peace.

The Years in Nazareth

Mother was quite different. We loved her, too, and she deserved our love. But while my father brought our home the rocklike sense of never being moved, my mother kept us always in suspense. At heart she was, I think, a poet, and she had the poet's sensitivity to everything life laid upon her doorstep. Her mind turned gay or sad as sun and rain do battle for the hills. Her soul went up and down as hot and cold sweep back and forth across the skies. God was just as real to her as to my father, but she could not be as patient as my father while she waited for the consummation of God's will. Mother was often indignant. She was often excited. She was often full of joy and just as frequently cast down in despair.

About those early years in Nazareth I do not have the recollections which I wish I had. For many years I think we must have lived quite happily together, but the only memory I have about those years is that of watching Sepphoris destroyed. A man named Judas had assembled some 10,000 of the patriots of Galilee. "No king but God!" was their cry, and they hoped to overthrow the rule of Rome. But Varus put them down, and with the other people of the town I still remember climbing up the hill at Nazareth and looking out across the three short miles to see the houses burning there. I still remember, too, the Roman officer who came one day to talk to father and the crosses which my father had to make to help the Romans crucify the rebels. For days my father scarcely spoke at all, and even then I knew how much the slaughter hurt him and how the need to share in it brought anguish to his heart.

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The Pulpit for March, 1953. Volume XXIV, Number 3. Published monthly by the Christian Century Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. Telephone HArrison 7-5380. Price this issue: 30 cents; $3 a year in U. S. A. and Canada. Foreign $3.35. Copyrighted 1953 by Christian Century Foundation. Entered as second-class matter May 14, 1942 in Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

I could tell you that I loved my brother Jesus from the start, but that would not be true. I may as well confess at once that there were times I hated him, times I longed to hurt him, times I wished him dead. Until I reached the age of 10 I do not think I thought of him as any different from any one of us. He played as hard and laughed as hard and cried as hard as any child in Nazareth, and I cannot remember anything about him at that time which would not be as truly said of Joses or of Juda.

But in the year that I was 10 we went up to Jerusalem in pilgrimage. Returning, we had left the city on a Friday morning, and it was Friday night before we realized that Jesus was not with us. We had to spend a whole day's travel going back to find him, and then the only thing he had to say was that he thought we understood that he must "be about his Father's business." At that time Jesus was a boy of 12, and I remember telling him I thought that he was something of a prig, and that he ought to be ashamed that he had caused us such delay and inconvenience.

I began to notice after that how frequently his thoughts seemed far away, how many times he climbed the hills behind the town and stayed up there alone until the darkness came. One afternoon I followed him to find out where he went, but all he did was just to lie down up there in the tawny grass and camel thorn and gaze through the great blue thistles across the hills and valleys toward the sea.

A Prophet without Honor

But I think what really turned my irritation to resentment was the way he acted when the Baptist started preaching. No sooner had Jesus heard what John was saying than my brother hurried off to be baptized of him, and from that day we seldom saw him any more. I am not sure you can understand the way we felt those next few months. Jesus was to us a man as other men are men. He had a trade as other men have trades. Father had been dead two years, and being oldest, Jesus was the family's support and stay. We were by no means wealthy people, but we were respected, and we had no stomach for the comments people soon began to make about us.

From the Jordan River he had gone into the wilderness a while, and then had gathered to his side a motley group of fishermen and tax collectors. He called them his disciples, and together they were wandering around the countryside and preaching of the God who loved the common people and would lift them from their wretchedness. That was bad enough, of course, as it was bad enough that I had now to take upon myself his duties in the shop and in the home. But suddenly reports came rolling in about a new twist in his thinking. They were calling him the Son of God, and he was telling them that they were right. They were acclaiming him the promised King of Israel, and he encouraged that acclaim. He talked of sitting on the right hand of the Father in heaven, they told us. He said that one day we should see him in the clouds of glory, coming to the earth to judge the erring sons of men. "No one comes to the Father, but by me," he was saying. "He who has seen me has seen the Father," he preached to them.

It isn't easy to regard your brother as the Son of God, nor was it easy for the town to think of him in such terms. "How's Jesus these days?" someone would ask me as I walked along the street. "I really pity you boys in the shop! It must be tough to have a brother such as that. He's a cracked walnut if I ever saw one!" And over and over again the passers-by would fling their taunts at us. "God been home lately?" they would ask. "Let me know when you expect him. I want to get myself dressed up to greet him!"

The day he tried to preach in Nazareth the people ran him out of town and even dragged him up the cliff to throw him to his death. He got away, but I remember wishing that he hadn't; and when the word reached Nazareth that they had crucified him, I cannot say honestly that I was sad. By that time most of us were sure that he was crazy, and although we were not happy in the awful method chosen for his execution, we could not avoid a sense of gratitude that now at last his tortured life was over and the family could be at peace once more.

Now, I think that I could willingly have let the matter drop right there, but mother would not have it so. From friends just back from Bethlehem we learned that after he was crucified, his followers had come to Galilee. Their great crusade had now been ended, and having fitted out their fishing boats again, they had been seen outside Capernaum—a chastened group of men whose very silence told the world about their disillusionment. "Go talk with them, my son," my mother said to me. "Learn all you can about what Jesus said and did down there. Find out from them the way he died, and—ask them where they buried him."

A New Spirit

So I went as she desired that I should, and nothing I have ever done has meant so much to me as that. I did not find the men I sought beside the lake—or anywhere in Galilee at all. But what a host of rumors ran around the waterfront! "Yes," the fishermen informed me, "the followers of Jesus *had* come back to fish the lake again. They had been discouraged and dejected, too. But not so *now!* For one day something happened to them, and all at once they started telling everyone that Jesus was not dead at all, that he was still alive, and that God wanted them to tell all men of him. They were ashamed, they said, of that which they had done and failed to do down in Jerusalem, and they had headed swiftly southward to proclaim their tidings in the Holy City's streets and make the people understand what heretofore they had not even understood themselves.

I did not have the courage to return to Nazareth without some surer word than this to tell my mother. So I started southward, too, and always

as I went I heard the stories of the men who went before me. The stone rolled away from the door! The tomb empty! The body gone! The living presence met and felt and known! I still did not believe the tales I heard, of course, and yet there was a fire in them which I could not wholly thrust aside. The men might be deluded, but at the very least it was a grand delusion which they suffered. They really believed what they said, and none could doubt their earnestness in saying it.

Jesus Was Still Living

At last I reached Jerusalem, and scarcely had I entered it when I saw evidence that they were there before me. Little groups of people stood on almost every corner, and as I passed I heard my brother's name repeated many times. There was an air of tension in the city, and when some hours later I first heard the man called Peter speak, I knew the reason why. There was unabashed abandonment in what he said. There was unfettered fearlessness in how he said it. Jesus was the Christ, he declared, and Jesus Christ was living now. The chief priest had not killed him. The Romans had not destroyed him. The cross was not the end of him, and though you searched the tomb from top to bottom, you would never find the man you thought that they had laid away there. For he had risen from the dead, and he would live for evermore.

At first I thought that Peter was as mad as Jesus himself once had been, but in the days that followed I heard James speak, too—that James who was the son of Zebedee. I heard John, Bartholomew and Thomas. I listened to the stories which they told and felt their urgency in telling them. I talked with them myself. I questioned them, examined them, attempted to refute them. But all to no avail. The man they knew had really lived and really died, they said, but now he lived again and would through all eternity. Their lives had meaning now, they told me. Their lives had purpose. Their lives had victory. In Jesus' life and death God's will had been made known, and in his resurrection God had shown that what he willed he had the power to accomplish. God was in them, and nothing could break them. God was behind them, and nothing could stop them.

You know without my telling you that in the end I put my trust in what they told me. It was not that I wanted to believe but only that I had no other choice. Their honesty was too transparent. Their earnestness was too convincing. And if I needed even further proof that what they said was really true, I had that proof as through the coming months they quietly gave up their lives for what they said and did. From house to house the chief priest hounded them. From place to place the Romans followed them. And one by one the officials killed them. "Do men give up their lives for dreams?" I asked myself. "Will men preach falsehood if the compensation for their preaching is another nail driven into their coffins?"

There is better evidence of Jesus' resurrection than of Jesus' birth or Jesus' death. For of all the witnesses that Jesus rose from death the very church itself is visible embodiment. The church did not come into being when a baby boy was born at Bethlehem; and when that baby boy was crucified at Calvary the little fragments of the church which had already been assembled were dispersed and cast apart. It was only when the risen Christ appeared that at last the church was born; and that this church exists at all is all the evidence we need that Jesus is not dead. Stephen stoned and Peter crucified and Paul beheaded—there you have the evidence of Jesus' resurrection! The mighty pageantry of Christian saints and martyrs through the centuries—there you have the evidence of Jesus' resurrection! The great cathedrals on the continent, the tiny meetinghouses at the country crossroads, the lonely chapels in the wilds of Africa and Asia—there you have the evidence of Jesus' resurrection!

Take the word of one who knows what he is talking of. It was triumph which the church was born to celebrate. It was victory the church was born to preach. And that victory was Jesus' resurrection. He rose, I tell you! He rose, and by his rising drew the sting from death and robbed the grave of mastery. Because he lives, we, too, shall live. We shall live in triumph on the earth, and we shall live in victory when we have left the earth.

WHAT IS EASTER?

By Alton M. Motter

Managing Editor, The Pulpit; *Executive Director Chicago Sunday Evening Club*

EASTER is more than a date on the calendar. It is more than an event in the cycle of the seasons—budding trees, green grass, singing birds or warm earth.

Easter is more than an occasion for wearing a new hat or dress, a new tie or suit.

Easter is more than displaying a flower or visiting a park.

Easter is more than a day for family gatherings, for meeting friends or finding colored eggs and candy rabbits.

Easter is more than merely going to church, though the Church can help us find the sacred meaning of this Eternal Day.

Easter is God's day.

Easter is the day which marks the resurrection of his Son from the grave.

Easter is the assurance that what we call "death" is not the end of life.

Easter is the proof that love can never be permanently crucified but will ultimately triumph over hate.

Easter is the promise of immortality. It is a glimpse of God's plan for our eternal fellowship with him.

Doubting Our Unbelief

By Ernest Marshall Howse

Hebrews 2:8

IN HIS poem "Bishop Blougram's Apology" Robert Browning pictures a medieval bishop talking after dinner with a friend who is a thoroughgoing unbeliever. The bishop himself, as Browning portrays a penetrating diagnosis of character, is an urbane skeptic who views with tolerant indifference many of the tenets of his supposed creed. But he is an unusual man; and though a skeptic, is not a fool. Indeed, he sees further than his superficial friend who would dogmatically deny everything called dogma.

The bishop asks his friend to suppose that they could be "unbelievers both, calm and complete," and could together throw overboard all the affirmations of faith. Could they then expect, amid the experiences of this mysterious life, just to maintain that blankness "today, tomorrow and forever?"

"Not so, I think," said the bishop. If we tried to be complete unbelievers, he reasons, we should simply find that whereas before we were shaken by doubts of our belief, now we should be shaken by doubts of our unbelief. The mystery of our mortal life, that is, challenges our negations as it does our affirmations. As the bishop said:

> Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
> A chorus-ending from Euripides,—
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
> As old and new at once as Nature's self,
> To rap and knock and enter in our soul.

The fact is, as the skeptical bishop saw, that if life brings us to the place where belief is incredible, it also brings us to the place where unbelief is still more incredible.

ERNEST MARSHALL HOWSE, an editorial associate of The Pulpit, *has served as pastor of Bloor Street United Church, Toronto, Canada, since 1948. A native of Newfoundland, he received his theological training at Pine Hill Divinity Hall, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Union Theological Seminary, New York, and the University of Edinburgh, where he earned his Ph. D. degree. He is the author of* Saints in Politics, *a study of the "Clapham Sect" and the growth of freedom, which has just been published by the University of Toronto Press. He served pastorates in California and Winnipeg before going to Toronto and has carried responsibilities for his church body as well as for the World Council of Churches.*

On this Easter morning, Robert Browning's poem, which has let a plumb line far down into unfathomed waters, comes to us with a timely word. Easter celebrates "the soul's invincible surmise," the immortal hope of immortality. Now to speak not glibly but with serious reflection, that belief, though sublimely daring, staggers us with its difficulty. It confronts us indeed with the ultimate mystery of existence: the mystery of the life of the spirit in a universe of atoms and of fire, the nature of that life, the meaning and the destiny.

The Immortal Hope

Long before the writers to the Hebrews lived, Sophocles had flung out his unanswered question: "Oh, ye deathward going tribes of men, what do your lives mean?"

Deathward going tribes of men! There are people listening here who have passed the ancient limit of three score years and ten. It is almost frightening to reflect that during their fleeting years more than two million human beings have reached the end of mortal life and passed into "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns."

Our minds, of course, are unable to comprehend the magnitude of our mathematical symbols. Recently, some realist in Washington pointed out that one million dollars in crisp new one thousand dollar bills would make a neat little pile 8 inches high. But one billion dollars would carry that same pile up and up and up until it was 110 feet higher than the Washington Monument.

Some of you, with a life span passed, think on some loved one whose parting steeped your days in pain. Can you realize that if you had to number every human being who had so passed in your lifetime you would have to think of a pile of bank notes twice as high, and with every thickness representing a congregation that would fill this church?

What an unimaginable multitude! Hitler and Gandhi marched in that procession; Goering and Garibaldi; Lenin and Livingstone; Bluebeard and Robert Browning; and hundreds of millions of others, poor and rich, ignorant and educated, bad and good, white, black, yellow and brown—a few parading by amid the benedictions or the maledictions of mankind, but the vast majority, undistinguished and unknown, yet having shared with us the breath of being before they went beyond

that bourne whither our footsteps have already turned to follow.

Oh, ye deathward going tribes of men, What do your lives mean?

Anyone who will reflect with integrity upon that picture must acknowledge that to find its full interpretation confronts us with problems beyond the capacity of mortal mind completely to comprehend. But if in our reflection we find that faith in immortality poses unanswerable questions, let us like the bishop consider as clearly the opposite conviction and face as honestly the opposite incredibilities.

Unfinished Business

It is an impossibility, a blatant and fantastic impossibility that a universe of furious atoms and endless fires should have produced a Christ saying from a cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." But that manifest impossibility having actually been brought to pass, it is no longer a thing incredible that the life so totally different from its womb of fire should not be totally limited by it. We might in all reason anticipate that God having started something like that would not just leave it on the skin of our planet—Unfinished Business.

It is folly to dodge that dilemma, of the appearance of the life of the spirit in a universe of fire, by pretending that it is not there; by declaring that the hands of Christ and the cross on which they were nailed were real, that the spear which pierced his side and the blood and water which flowed out were real, but that the spirit that led him there was just an illusion. That is the most unreal of all dogmatisms. Spiritual life is part of the sum total of all reality—the most amazing part, far more amazing than protons and neutrons. If a molecular structure or an algebraic equation can be respected as a fact on which to formulate a philosophy of the universe, much more the mind of a Plato, the genius of a Beethoven, the devotion of a good mother, the sacrificial passion of a Christ. To refuse to admit the reality of such facts is simply to cast aside intellectual integrity. The life of the spirit is real. It is the culminating mystery of a mysterious universe.

Intelligent Reality

It is folly further to say that the life of the spirit though real appeared in this universe as an accident with no forethought of intelligence.

Everyone knows that if some freak mishap upset a box of type out of an airplane there would not be one chance in all the millions that human beings ever could count that the cloud of letters would fall on the ground with such intelligent sequence as to spell one line of Shakespeare, "To be or not to be." And if human beings ever discovered type arranged to produce not merely one single sentence but an ordered progression of intelligent thought, the subtle delineation and the bold design or great drama, then they would accept as an invincible necessity of the mind the conclusion that that consistent whole did not appear as a freak of chance in a fortuitous eddy of whirling alphabets. Intelligent consequence does not continue without intelligent cause.

Therefore, if we try to believe that the stupendous processes of creation which have gone on from fire to mud, and from mud to the amoeba, and from the amoeba to the Cro-Magnon man, and from the Cro-Magnon Man to Isaiah and St. Francis and Gladstone and Kagawa, are just accidental patterns of "dynamic dirt going it blindly" —well, that won't do! Long continued harmony of intelligent consequence does not arise from unintelligent cause. The life of the spirit is real. It is a part of total reality, it is a part of intelligent reality. If we try to disbelieve that we soon begin to doubt our unbelief.

It is further folly to try to believe that the life of the spirit which is part of intelligent reality is so without any purpose. The property of intelligence is to proceed with purpose.

Bertrand Russell once said that God, in boredom, made the race of human kind and deliberately beset with pains and perils, planning one day to say, "A good play, that," and brush it aside into annihilation.

It is not long before we begin to question such facile skepticism. Though we cannot comprehend the drama of creation we can see that in it something big is afoot. We can catch the sweep of vast design in that creative power which through eons of time moves inscrutably from lower to higher forms, from death to life, from the crystal to the cell, from the organism to the animal, from the animal to the human, until in the consummation the creature looks back at the Creator and says, "Our Father."

To say that all the mystery of sustained creation is transitory, fugitive, beginning with no reason, governed by no purpose, reaching nowhere, having no consequence, just does not jibe with the level of intelligence involved. If we consider the life of the spirit, so manifestly real, so manifestly the expression of intelligence, and try to tell ourselves all that has no purpose, we doubt our unbelief.

Faith and Purpose

Yet, to continue our thought, if human life has purpose we cannot evade the compelling implications that such purpose can be explained only in terms that are more expansive than the limits of physical existence. Nobody who has watched a baby grow from infancy to childhood and from childhood to maturity can escape the power of the suggestion that human beings were designed for something more than just to live and die as dogs and apes. Plainly, man is equipped for more than can be comprehended in the life of the animal. The animal is concerned with the things that satisfy his animal appetites. Man is different. He can have all these things and know that he has nothing that matters. His animal needs are only instruments for more than animal desires. He needs art, music, books, ideals for himself and for society. He needs not only food to live on but faith to live by and purpose to live for.

Moreover, man's capacity for his highest life glows to greater flame as his fleshly habitation slowly succumbs to its ultimate decay. Corot declares at 77, "If the Lord lets me live two years longer I think I can paint something beautiful." William James, as he is going to death says, "I am just getting fit to live." Goethe, as he steps into the darkness exclaims, "More light, Lord."

The more truth we learn the more we are able to learn. The more goodness we see the more we are able to see. The further we go the further we are able to go. Our bodies are heir to animal decay but our spirits are on a road with no visible terminus. We are dwelling in a world whose margin fades forever and forever as we move. Human life has what philosophers call "unexplainable over-endowment" for mere physical existence.

In shallow little coves at summer resorts you have seen flat boats that children can rent for an hour. A glance will tell you they are not intended to do more than hug the nearest shore. You may also have seen great liners like the Queen Elizabeth at an ocean port. They are different. For the moment little tugs may be pushing them into some moldy pier, but you know that the time will come when they will cast off their hawsers and head out to sea. They are designed to do business in great waters.

So one feels about the human soul. It was made for more than the shoals and ports of time. It was designed to do business in great waters. We are led to that belief not by abandonment of reason but by the irresistible strength of reason at its highest. It is in our clearest moments, our wisest moods, that we doubt our unbelief.

Faith and Reason

Yet, though reason invades our doubts and we believe because God has touched us with rational insight, the Easter faith finds its ultimate grounds beyond reason. It is grounded, as Paul saw, in faith; not in sight but in *insight*—an insight that is not contrary to reason, but is all the reason we have, plus a bold leap beyond, a stalwart affirmation of the soul.

The generations have not believed in immortality because they have reasoned about it; but they have reasoned about it because they have believed in it. The unbelief of men in century after century has not been broken down by a march of syllogisms, but rather has been overpassed by "A fancy from a flowerbell, someone's death. . . ." Someone's death!

From the time of Plato until the day when perhaps one of you laid the body of some loved one beneath the merciless clay, the unconquerable conviction has arisen in the soul: Death hath no dominion over him.

That was what sent the early Christians out into the Roman Empire, radiant in the power of an endless life. Much they did not comprehend; but they did not need to comprehend. They said, as a writer of the Hebrews has left it to us, "We do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor." In his continuing presence they rose up to say, "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not appear what we shall be." And again, "For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. . . . Then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' "

They were unable to evade or to destroy that strong belief; and in that conviction they were across the centuries akin of soul to ourselves.

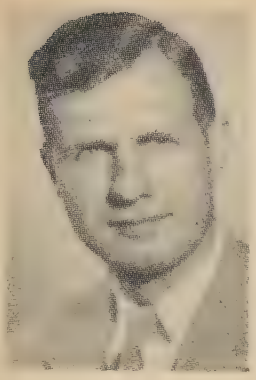
Our common picture of ourselves, then, is often strangely at variance with the truth. We picture ourselves as people trying to guard our belief and finding it difficult. Actually, modern people can often be more truly pictured as trying to guard their unbelief and finding it impossible. They try not to believe. They try to set aside the conviction that for ages has been an irrepressible affirmation of the human spirit, expressed by the simplest of God's children in the most unlettered tribes, and by the mightiest intellects that ever grappled with the issues of life and death, from Plato to St. Paul, from Kant to Lord Kelvin and Eddington and Arthur Compton. They construct laborious arguments against it, they elaborate skepticisms to disprove it. They attempt vainly to convince their own minds that Isaiah and Beethoven, Wycliffe and Wesley, and that dear soul whom you have loved and lost a while, are no more than a dollar's worth of chemicals, which happened for a transient day to be arranged in a particular pattern that produced an illusion—a pattern of no more significance than the next that will produce a clod of earth or a skylark, a snowflake or a desert weed. Small wonder that at times they cannot help doubting their unbelief, that they cannot help wondering whether the perishable values of the dust can comprise all the imperishable values of the spirit.

On Easter Day the strongest doubts within us are the doubts of our unbelief. The light of Easter dawn far outshines the poet's pale "sunset-touch"; and more miraculously than the rays which leap the solar spaces, its unfading afterglow spans the centuries with a splendor which brightens our souls this morning as we repeat the ancient affirmation of St. Paul, "This mortal nature must put on immortality."

In that faith today we dignify our lives, we ground our character, we assert our hope invincible. It is beyond our reason to speak but it is not beyond our feeling to sing, "Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

God's Personal Approach

Jesus, then, is God's personal approach from an unseen world which meets me where I need him in the stream of human history. Jesus didn't *bring* the Gospel, he *is* the Gospel. The Gospel lies in his person. He didn't come to *bring* the love of God, he *is* the love of God.—*E. Stanley Jones in an address before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club.*



A Sermon of Self-Examination for Lent

These Things I Saw at the Cross

By W. Wesley Shrader

SEVERAL months ago I was disturbed by a strange and vivid dream: I was a visitor in Jerusalem the day of the crucifixion. The trials were over and Jesus had been delivered up for execution. He had already begun the long and painful march to Calvary. I fell in with the mob which had formed a line a half-mile long behind the staggering form of the condemned. By the time I reached the scene of the execution the ugly work had begun. The nails were ripping the flesh of both hands while the warm blood spurted across the twitching body. I closed my eyes and turned my head. By sheer force of will, I stayed until the bitter end. Each minute of those several hours spelled eternity. At last as the throng was dispersed, I was lost in the disappearing crowd.

Three impressions summarize my dream of that memorable day nearly two thousand years ago. First, *I saw men as animals.* Wild, untamed beasts they were. For the first time in my life I saw the evil of which men are capable. It was so extreme that I immediately began to rationalize the situation. "This," I said, "is the way ancient man lived." In rapid succession I recalled the brutality of Pharoah and the slaughtering of the babies of Herod. For a brief moment I felt relieved that this was the pattern of ancient people, not that of my own age. Then the horror of Buchenwald, the gas chambers, and the screaming thousands at Hiroshima drowned out my defense of the twentieth century. Such evil is not ancient I was reminded. It is contemporaneous with every generation. No progress has eliminated or softened it.

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"But surely such awful deeds are confined to the ignorant, uncultured and unchurched," I said. Then my eyes studied more closely those who had gleefully joined the bloodthirsty mob and to my stunned amazement I saw that one of the leaders was a college professor, a friend of mine of long standing. Next to him was a woman, an outstanding civic leader in our community, a club woman of great influence. Her face, too, was distorted in rage. And behind her, waving his hands wildly in the air and cursing in a loud, vulgar voice was a member of the church to which I belonged. May the ignorant, uncultured and unchurched alone be condemned? The voice of history whispered to me, "You have seen at close range the way human beings respond, in any age, when their security has been threatened, when their egoes have been deflated, when their prejudices have ruled their wills."

A New Conception

The second impression from this dream was that *I saw Jesus Christ as God.* Before my eyes a miracle was taking place. One far more skilled than I could describe the incident, but it is beyond my powers to do so. Christ seemed to be enveloped in pure Spirit. I remembered seeing an automobile in a show window completely covered by cellophane. This disembodied Spirit enveloped Christ in much the same way so that I could not tell where the physical Jesus ended and the Spirit began. Thus, when the nails went into the hands of Jesus they first penetrated the Spirit who gave every evidence of being pained not so much by the nails as by the temper of those who drove the nails.

A childhood conception of God forever vanished from my faith. I had had the idea that Jesus' death was necessary to appease God, whose righteousness demanded blood but was satisfied only by the pure blood of Jesus. Now I saw that Jesus and God were not related as two separate personalities. God was in Christ in a very personal and unique way and sinful men, in nailing Jesus to the cross, were actually nailing their Maker to the cross. It was not a Jeremiah or an Isaiah dying at the hands of wicked men; it was divinity entering vicariously into the travail and pain of earthly existence. So I beheld Jesus on the cross, not simply as a good man suffering at the hands of

wicked men, but also as the God-man dying to reconcile men to himself.

The third impression was even more startling: *I saw myself a man in conflict.* I was repulsed by what I saw in the surging mob about me. And I was ashamed to be counted a member of the human race. I wanted to lash out at those nearest me. Fiery words came to my tongue. Though I realized that nothing I could do would stay the execution, something in me insisted on my making myself known as a Christian, a follower of him on the cross.

But the hot words that came to my tongue were not spoken. I offered no protest; I lifted not a finger. I was dumb, frozen. I hid my identity as a Christian. Naturally, the mob accepted me as one of them. A vulgar fellow lurched against me and in an insane voice addressed himself to me as a comrade. "Look at him squirm," he shouted as the soldier shoved the spear in Jesus' side. "He nearly ruined our country—he ran with Gentile dogs and made their children believe they were as good as we. This will be his finish. He's getting what he deserved, don't you think?"

Here was the chance to make my colors known, to identify myself with my Lord. I was a Christian but the mob did not know it. To speak the word, to condemn the foul deed enacted before me—this I could not do. Dumb. Frozen. Still. Thus, I was accepted as one of them.

Here was a strange predicament: the call of duty was strong, yet I chose the other direction. Sometimes right and wrong are very confusing. Relativity makes them so. But here there was no relative right and relative wrong. The paths were in opposite directions. Right and wrong were never clearer. "Why am I silent?" I asked. "Why do I let them think I am one of them?" These questions demanded an answer. "Fear of the mob," I said. "In addition, I must live with these people after this thing is over." In dreams, time sequence has little meaning. Thus, I reminded myself that these people were my neighbors. I would have to live with them a long time and besides I had a future to look after. What good would be accomplished by making myself known as a Christian? So I rationalized my position.

Another Chance

At last the awful thing was over. As I left the scene my soul was stricken with remorse. The knowledge of my cowardice pressed down upon me like a crown of thorns. In torment I begged forgiveness. "Give me another chance," I prayed.

Then occurred the most terrifying thing of all. By the side of the road, I was stripped naked and left standing alone in the presence of Almighty God. At last the oppressive quietness was broken by the voice of God. The voice, sad but firm, was addressed directly to me as if I were the only person in the world. "One more chance? There can be no more chances. You have had a thousand chances and in each instance you have responded exactly as you responded today." The voice went on further: "You have so conditioned your will that it has lost its strength. Given ten thousand more chances you would respond and behave as you did today. You are banished forever from all that is good, true and beautiful. Forever, you will make your lot with what you saw around the cross today—the hate, the brutality, the lust, the greed. These you have chosen and yours these have become."

Having some gift for debate, I asked for an explanation of my "thousand previous chances." The voice rejoined—I thought with sarcasm—, "Gladly will I recall your chances." Then I was reminded that it had been mine to live in a day when the needs of suffering humanity were never greater. I had lived as a favorite son, with no thought of the hunger, the nakedness, the loneliness of these of my day and generation. I had lived in a day when weak people were exploited for no other reason than the color of their skin. And I had offered no word of protest.

Who are today's best contemporary preachers? Cast your vote for the Pulpit's board of editorial associates on page 24.

The voice further explained that my witness in giving and sharing had been weighed and found wanting. Remembering my weekly offering, I mumbled a feeble word of protest. Then appeared before me a scroll which slowly unrolled. There before my eyes was a complete list of all the gifts I had ever made—every penny, nickle and dollar since childhood. It was an awful record compared with my expenditures for luxuries! Then I made the classic statement of the entire dream, "The secretary must have made a mistake."

"My secretary makes no mistakes," the voice said. "Your denial at this point is not so much due to the smallness of the gifts, but because at no time did you ever share your life sacrificially."

The voice said in conclusion: "Your witness in worship has been just as bad. Yes, you went to church. But, your going to worship was on the lowest possible level. You refused to yield your life to the will of God. Thus, across the years you conditioned yourself. That is why, when confronted by the mob at the cross, you were dumb when you should have spoken. Your banishment from the light is not a decree of mine. It is the destiny you have consistently chosen during the years that have passed."

I was awakened by a robin singing at my window. It was the same old world, but a new day. To my relief I knew that another chance awaited me. I solemnly promised myself that I would make the most of that chance.

A Prayer for the Prayerless

Hearer of prayer, to thee all flesh shall come!
Not only to our faltering cries give heed;
Regard the griefs of those whose lips are dumb,
The utter need of those who feel no need!

EFFIE SMITH ELY.

The Call of the Cross

By James P. Wesberry

We preach Christ crucified. I Corinthians 1:23.

THE CROSS makes it impossible for us ever to forget Jesus. It is the central symbol of Christianity. The traditional plan of our churches is patterned upon the form of the cross. In most of our congregations the cross is given a conspicuous place. We mount it upon our church towers and carve it upon our pulpits. Many of our most sacred hymns are devoted to its praise. It is indeed at the very heart of our religious faith. That strange man upon his cross is the world's supreme attraction.

In John Masefield's book *The Trial of Jesus,* the wife of Pontius Pilate asks the Roman centurian in charge of the crucifixion, "What do you think of his claim?" The centurian replies, "If a man believes anything up to the point of dying on a cross for it, he will find others to believe it." Still curious, she asks, "Do you think he is dead?" To this the captain of the guard replies, "No, lady, I don't." "Where is he then?" she cries, and he answers, "Let loose in the world, lady, where neither Roman nor Jew can stop his truth!" Long, long ago Jesus let some truths loose in the world by his death upon Calvary. Through these truths God speaks to our hearts today. The cross is God's clarion call, beckoning us today. Just what is the call of the cross? Why is the cross so important to our faith? What is its challenge to our individual lives?

The first call of the cross is a condemning call. Sin is our refusal to do God's will. It is man's worst enemy. But Christ died for our sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. The Son of man did "not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Our sins crucified the Lord of glory; our evil tongues maligned him: our sins were the thorns that pierced his sacred brow, the scourges that made his flesh raw with gashes and red with blood, the nails that pierced his hands and the spikes that tore his feet. The cross forever cries out against our sins and calls us to repentance.

The Call of God's Love

As we stand in the shadow of the cross today we hear also the call of God's love. The cross tells of a love that is beyond our highest expectations. It tells us that first, last and always God is the supreme lover of man. His love passeth all understanding.

When God made man in his own image he took all the excellencies of his own moral nature, wove them into a crown of glory and placed it upon his brow. But Satan, the archenemy of the soul, took his dart, dipped it deep in sin's poison and hurled it straight into man's heart. God sought to woo man back through the thunderings of the law, the songs of the poets and the writings of the prophets, but man continued his downward path to destruction.

God saw man yet in his sins—poor, wretched and without hope. It broke his heart. He said, "I know what I will do. I will show man how much I love him, and that will bring him back to me." So, 2,000 years ago, as God walked one day into the beautiful garden of his great love, he plucked the lily of the valley and the rose of Sharon and made them into a gorgeous bouquet. With cords of mercy he let that beautiful bouquet down into a manger in the little town of Bethlehem, and the world heard: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

God's love is revealed in the cross. Love is centered here as nowhere else in the universe. The cross is the window through which we see into the very heart of God. The Atlantic ocean is broad, but we know there is a place at which its waves dash upon far shores. The stars seem far away, but there is a point at which the most distant is placed. With God's love, there is no limit. Someone has said that, if he had been God, he could have given himself but he could never have given his son. Actually God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and the nails that went through the hands of Jesus went through the heart of God.

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The call that comes from the cross is also God's call to salvation. There are many substitute methods which offer salvation, but there is really only one way that leads to eternal life, and that is by way of the cross.

Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown tells of a conversation between Auguste Compte, the French philosopher, and Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish essayist. Compte declared his intention of starting a new religion which would supplant entirely the religion of Christ. It was to have no mysteries, but was to be as plain as the multiplication table and its name was to be "Positivism." "Very good, Mr. Compte," Carlyle replied, "very good! All you will need to do will be to speak as never man spoke, and live as never man lived, and be crucified, and rise again the third day, and get the world to believe that you are still alive. Then your new religion will have a chance to get on." Suffice it to say that "Positivism" did not go very far. No, we do not need a new religion. The religion that centers in the cross of Christ and in the Christ of the cross is an all-sufficient religion. It can meet every need of our souls.

In the seventh chapter of Revelation is John's beautiful description of heaven. A great multitude which no man can number stands before the Lamb clothed in white robes, symbolic of their purity, with palms in their hands to signify their victory over sin. One of the elders asks, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence came they?" The answer is, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

What does it mean to be washed in the blood of the Lamb? These are empty sounds and idle words unless they mean that we may be baptized in the spirit of Christ. The blood of Christ is the symbol of his outpoured and communicated life which alone has power to cleanse from sin. No man has strayed so far in sin that he cannot be saved if he will repent and have faith in Christ. It is the distinctive glory of Christ that he can save all who put their trust in him.

The challenge of the call from the cross is summed up in Elizabeth Cheney's poem "There Is a Man on the Cross"*:

> Whenever there is a silence around me
> By day or by night—
> I am startled by a cry.
> It came down from the cross—
> The first time I heard it.
> I went out and searched—
> And found a Man in the throes of crucifixion,
> And I said, "I will take you down,"
> And I tried to take the nails out of his feet.
> But he said, "Let them be
> For I cannot be taken down
> Until every man, every woman, and every child
> Come together to take Me down."
> And I said, "But I cannot bear to hear You cry.
> What can I do?"
> And He said, "Go about the world—
> Tell everyone you meet—
> There is a Man on the cross."

**The Master of Men: Quotable Poems About Jesus,* compiled by Thomas C. Clark. Copyright 1930. Published by Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York.

FAITHFULNESS IN LITTLE THINGS

A Children's Sermon by Harold L. Lunger

A FRIEND of mine, whom we will call Mr. Smith, has many people who come to him for counsel and advice. One day he and a lawyer friend, whom we will call Mr. Brown, stopped downtown for coffee and a roll. It must have been some time ago, because when they got the check Mr. Smith's bill was only 15 cents. The waitress, however, made a mistake on Mr. Brown's check and charged him only a nickel—even though he had had coffee and a roll, too, just like Mr. Smith.

When Lawyer Brown got his check and saw the amount, he quickly turned it over on the table in front of him and went on talking. Mr. Smith noticed the mistake, but said nothing.

When they were ready to leave, Mr. Brown was the first at the cashier's counter. He paid his nickel and walked out. Mr. Smith paid his 15 cents and followed him.

Several months later another man was talking to Mr. Smith about an estate. A member of this man's family had died leaving a considerable amount of property and money. The services of a lawyer were needed to settle the affairs. Since a lot of property was involved, the fee for the lawyer who got the job would amount to several thousand dollars.

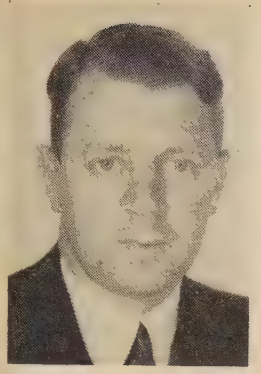
The friend said to Mr. Smith, "I've been thinking about giving the job to Mr. Brown. What do you know about him?" Mr. Smith thought a moment and then said simply, "I don't believe I would give it to him if I were you."

Mr. Smith's advice was followed. Mr. Brown lost the case and the large fee that went with it.

And the reason? As Mr. Smith put it to me, "A man who would be dishonest for a dime cannot be trusted with a large sum of money."

One day Jesus told a story to show how important it is to be honest and dependable in little things. We know it as the parable of the talents. To a man who had been honest with a relatively small amount of money, the judge said, "You have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much."

HAROLD L. LUNGER is minister of First Christian Church, Tucson, Ariz., and an active leader in the ecumenical movement.



You Are Not Helpless

By Alan Walker

Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth. Jeremiah 1:6.

DEEP within all our hearts today is a feeling of helplessness. Each world crisis of this century has caused us to drop our hands and say: What can I do about it? The issues are so complex and the distance so great between us, the common people, and the leaders who make crucial decisions, that we are overcome by a mood of resignation or frustration.

In the Old Testament is the story of Jeremiah, who lived through another of history's tumultuous, tempestuous periods. Babylon and Egypt were at grips, fighting for world mastery, making tiny Israel and the people in it seem unimportant and helpless. But suddenly, amid the spreading chaos and terror, a challenge came to Jeremiah to do something about it. His answer was the one we so often give today: "Ah, Lord God! I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." What can I do about it?

Jeremiah's complaint was true. He was but a country lad, unknown and untried. Yet presently he became a man, for the Lord told him, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth.' . . . Be not afraid . . . for I am with you to deliver you." God spoke to him of the future in terms which must have seemed to him absurdly impossible of fulfillment: "See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." Time brought justification. Jeremiah shows us that individual men and women, far from the center of events, are not unimportant, nor are they helpless.

You are not helpless. In the face of a menacing world situation you need not stand mesmerized and afraid. There are certain attitudes you can adopt, certain things you can do, now. You are not helpless.

In one of the Psalms there appears the sentence: "He is not afraid of evil tidings; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord." It shows one course of action. We can escape the tyranny of the passing and threatening parade of events by believing in the sovereignty of God.

A Christian believes that, standing at the center of history, amid the events of time, is a stubborn, unyielding core of reality which is the fact of God. As Herbert Butterfield, the historian, puts it: "Man is working on material which is alive and which may rebel against him, and there is a Providence which complicates the effects of actions taken. It is this Providence which in fact has the last word to say about the results."

The Sovereign Power of God

Strange to say, it is the men who have tried to ignore this fact, themselves attempting to play God, who have become most aware of its operation. Napoleon was conscious of it. Bismarck once said, "The statesman must reach for the hem of God's garment when he hears him rustling through events." And Hitler ran into something far greater than the armies and airforces which brought him toppling down.

To believe that God is Lord of history and that his sovereign will is being expressed through events is to find freedom even amid the most coercive of situations. And being given freedom, we do not remain helpless. Faith restores to us the initiative. We are placed in a position to act.

There are few more inspiring incidents in history than that of Augustine's response to the news that Rome had fallen. One day in the year 410 A.D. a boat appeared off the coast of Africa at Hippo. Swiftly a messenger disembarked and burst into a room where Augustine sat with some of his priests. The man shouted, "Rome is fallen! Alaric and his Goths have sacked the city." All were thrown into consternation, until presently one of the priests turned to the old bishop for guidance. Augustine told him, "What we see today is the doom which falls upon an empire that has betrayed its sons." Fearfully the priest asked, "But if the earthly dominion passes away, what remains?" "The city of God remains," replied Augustine quietly, "and the church of God remains through which it is brought within the passing world."

You are not helpless because God is not helpless. He remains free in his world and so can we. History is the story of the judgments of God. Nothing

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ALAN WALKER, our editorial associate from Australia, is minister of the Waverley Methodist Mission of Sydney and is regarded as one of the younger leaders of the ecumenical movement. Following a visit last year to a number of American colleges and universities as a member of the National Council of Churches' University Christian Mission, his article "Carrying Religion to the Campus" appeared in the Christian Century. *He is chairman of the Australian Churches' Forum of the Air.*

need rob us of faith in the sovereignty of God. The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

You are not helpless because the thoughts you think do count. You can ask God to stand guard over your mind, giving your allegiance only to the truth.

The longer I live the more impressed I am with the importance and the power of the general mental attitude which, after a time, settles down over society on every issue. It is this climate of opinion that goes far toward determining the course of events. No leader entirely escapes its quiet pressures. It is the environment in which decisions are made and under which the life of the nations is carried on.

The important fact to realize is that each of us has something to do with creation of that environment of mental attitudes. The way we read the news, critically or trustingly; the comments we make to a neighbor or a traveling companion; the unworthy or false statements of others which we challenge or allow to pass unquestioned, all go to make that strange yet powerful force which is called "public opinion." Despair of it as we may, it remains the stuff from which history is made.

The Power of Mental Attitudes

Let me give an example. When China first intervened in Korea and the United Nations forces first were sent reeling backward, the world was suddenly thrown to the edge of the precipice of a third world war. Today I believe we would be fighting that war but for the power of world opinion. Everywhere the common people quietly made up their minds that Korea with its complex issues must not be an occasion for world conflict. That mood forced world statesmen into new conferences. It dragged the world back from immediate catastrophe. It revealed the power of the thought-life of the mass of the people across the earth.

You are not helpless. You can still think. And as we face a continuing tension in international affairs there are some principles we, as Christians, can keep steadily before us. Here are five I would dare to suggest:

1. Remember that for years every church statement on war has begun with the sentence: "War is incompatible with the mind of Christ."

2. Avoid oversimplification of issues. Examine critically the news which you read and hear.

3. Reject today's exaggerated trust in armed might. "Some boast of chariots, and some of horses; but we boast of the name of the Lord our God."

4. Remember that those called "enemies" are men for whom Christ died and for whom somebody cares.

5. Remember that the supreme concern of the Christian is not the national state but the universal Kingdom of God.

You are not helpless. You can pray, remembering the power of the thoughts we think: "O God, stand guard over my mind. Lead me to the truth."

I once heard a woman tell a huge assembly how and why her almost-wrecked marriage was restored. She said simply, "I realized how futile it was for me to go on praying for world peace and then to go to the courts for a divorce from my husband." She had made the important discovery that there is a link between the way we live day by day and world events.

The quality of life as lived by millions of people like us around the world does influence greatly the course of history. The great crises and disasters of mankind do arise out of the lives of the people. I know this is a claim which is hard, even impossible to prove, and yet I believe it is true. There is a connection between what we do, the standards we adopt, the values we obey, the lives we lead, and the course of world events.

Actions do count. The greedy, grasping man helps to make a greedy, grasping nation; a godless man, a godless nation; a man careless of the truth, a nation that is prone to dishonor its word; a materialist in thought and life, a world where force is king. If the supreme tragedy of war comes, it is but the truth about our lives and our society. It is the sin of the people brought into focus.

Thomas Carlyle was once asked who was to blame for the French Revolution. He replied, "Everyone, large or small, who had fallen short of their public duty." Again I quote Butterfield: "A civilization may be wrecked without any spectacular crimes or criminals but by constant petty breaches of faith and minor complicities on the part of men generally considered very nice people."

Jeremiah, faced with the tremendous events of his own time, found them a personal challenge. He felt he had to do something. He came to believe that his life could be thrown into the scales.

And so can yours and mine. You are not helpless. You can, by the grace of God, make your day-to-day living fight for peace, serve the cause of righteousness, build the Kingdom. Your life does count. You are not helpless.

Christ Works through Obedient Lives

You are not helpless because when Christ is offered faith and obedience we can work his will among men, for all authority and power have been given to him.

In the account of Jeremiah's call, the whole emphasis is on what God can do with him and through him. "I have set you this day over nations. . . . I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar . . . against the kings of Judah. . . . They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail." God promised that if Jeremiah would give his mind and his life utterly to the direction of God, then God would work his miracle and multiply the offering made. And looking back over the years we know that God's miracle was wrought, that through Jeremiah the impossible was achieved.

The challenge in this hour is then to give ourselves, believing, and to wait for what God will do because of our obedience. There is no doubt that we must continue to live amid crises. We shall probably not know a settled, ordered existence in

our lifetime. Tension, recurrent moments of great danger will remain. And through it all God will be awaiting the opportunity to re-create a perishing civilization. He will need men and women not numbed and paralyzed by fear or hope deferred, but dedicated, obedient, believing, who will quietly wait and work for the "consolation of Israel." In other words, God will be looking for those who trust in his renewing grace and act up to the measure of their faith.

There has appeared recently in our Australian bookshops the English translation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book *The Cost of Discipleship.* It reveals in great detail the life of one man of our time who gave to God all he had and who is being picked up by God for the renewing of a people.

Bonhoeffer, who was born in 1906, at 24 became a teacher of theology in Berlin. Then came the nazi challenge to the integrity of the church, and Bonhoeffer had to choose between acceptance of the new order and conflict. Jeremiah himself made his witness to the German theologian in the great words from the 45th chapter: "Do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not; . . . I will give you your life as a prize of war in all places to which you may go."

Bravely Bonhoeffer made his great choice and, stepping out from academic detachment, began to fight in Christ's name. Soon the Gestapo was on his track and he was imprisoned. In concentration camp he carried on a remarkable ministry among those who each week were led out to die, all the while knowing his turn would come. On April 9, 1945, with his brother and two brothers-in-law, he was led out and hanged. Then was fulfilled an earlier statement of his own in exposition of discipleship: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

Bonhoeffer, though dead, yet speaks. His life is one of the forces that are cleansing and renewing the life of the church and the people in Germany. God has accepted his obedience, in this case even unto death, and is working his will through it.

In today's hour of peril and world need, what can you do? You can offer all you have, your life, your faith, your obedience, believing that through consecrated persons God can work miracles. You may say, with Jeremiah: "Ah, Lord God! I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." With him you can express your helplessness. Then you will find you are not helpless, because God is not helpless.

An Easter Prayer

By Samuel M. Le Page

Pastor, First Congregational Church, Stapleton, Kansas

ALMIGHTY Father, for the beauty of the earth, for the joy of living, and for all the good things which are ours, we give thee hearty thanks and praise. We are glad for the springtime when all the out-of-doors is awakening to begin anew the process of growth. We rejoice in the blooming flowers, the budding trees, the singing birds and the thousand voices that proclaim the fact that spring is in the air. But even more do we rejoice in the fact that above and beyond this manifestation of life at our feet there is within us a life that is eternal and everlasting. Father, be gracious unto us and quicken this divine life so that we may be raised up in the image and likeness of the Man of Galilee—the One who was not holden of death but came forth from the open tomb to live forever with thee.

Merciful Father, separate us from all false delusions and remove from us all vain desires so that the life of the Son of God may have full sway within our hearts. Kindle anew within us the joy of thy salvation. Grant unto us the joy of finding the stone rolled away from the tomb of our dead selves. May the discarded garments of all our vain desires be left behind as mute evidence that we have been released from all that hampers and restrains.

O Lord God, grant that this life of faith may become a growing power, able to surmount all barriers, re-creating itself in the hearts of men and women of every race and every creed. In the providence of God, may all the difficulties that delay the coming of thy Day be removed, so that thy spirit may exercise its full power over death and destruction. May the voice that was once stilled be heard again in amplified form, and may the message of salvation, declared on Calvary's mountain, find new prophets to declare it. So, may the kingdoms of this world become indeed the kingdom of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Easter Hymn

Tune: St. Agnes

On Easter Day our praise we sing
To thee, our risen Lord.
Our love and life to thee we bring,
O thou eternal Word!

We turn from toil and weary loads
And find our rest in thee.
We drink beside life's dusty roads,
Thou fount of Galilee!

We raise to thee, this Easter Day
Our praise of joyful song;
For unto thee, the truth, the way,
All joy and praise belong.

JOHN W. SHACKFORD.

Pulpit Post

Rural Preachers and Preaching

SIR: I enjoyed reading your "For the Record" in the January Pulpit. I feel that rural preaching is equal to that of city pastors, but it just has not been "found" or given the chance. The fault is that of no one but the rural pastor. He just has never asserted himself, even though he is in the majority. Take a look at the editorial associates of The Pulpit. How many of them represent the rural pastorate? Perhaps some day we will wake up to the fact that there is no need for us to have inferiority complexes or hesitations about making ourselves known. Until then, don't give us any special privileges!

First Evangelical & Reformed, FRANK A. KOSTYU.
West Alexandria, Ohio.

Fewer Words

SIR: I add my word to the comments made by other readers of The Pulpit to say that you are still publishing the greatest journal of contemporary preaching. Please be careful lest you forget the purpose of the magazine. Too many articles appear in The Pulpit to crowd out the sermons heretofore published. The sermons have fewer words than heretofore.

Since the 1935 issues I have stood the copies on my shelf arranged by month. Now you increase the width of the copy by about a half inch. However, I suppose change is necessary, in spite of the inconvenience.

You have a great magazine and well worth the investment. Keep up the good work.

WILLIAM A. MACLACHLAN.
Mount Airy Methodist,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Catholic Sermons?

SIR: Just having mailed my subscription, I feel bold to comment on the letter of Clarence Perry in the December Pulpit.

Yes, do give us some sermons by leading evangelists. Also, another sermon by an outstanding rabbi. The sermon by Rabbi Cohn of Texas you once printed was splendid. Could you, would you, publish a sermon by a Catholic priest? Why not?

Bethany Congregational, WILLIAM I. NEWMAN.
Los Angeles, Calif.

Sharing the Pulpit

SIR: Having very little time, I did not have a chance to ask permission to mimeograph in the Christmas issue of our church paper five excerpts and that splendid paragraph from Dr. Kennedy's message published in the September and October numbers of The Pulpit. Such good sermons throw out inspiration that is hard to resist.

West Pullman Baptist, WILLIAM TATTER.
Chicago, Ill.

On Trial for Another Year

SIR: I have not been completely satisfied with The Pulpit. There have been moves in the right direction, and I appreciate the difficult task of trying to please the various segments of the church.

Good, honest, expository preaching (I agree with John C. Irwin) is needed, and the young men from the seminaries are realizing this. Certainly our small Mission House Seminary has realized it for years.

The next year will be a trial year for The Pulpit for me. Perhaps I will find it completely worth while, or perhaps I will have to turn elsewhere.

Marinette, Wis. HILTON GRAVES.

A Real Companion

SIR: Thank you for the fine work that you and your associates have been doing in editing The Pulpit. As a student in Union Theological Seminary I heard Henry Sloane Coffin recommend that we read The Pulpit. I have done so regularly since 1940 and can truthfully say I have been helped by every issue. During two years in Alaska, separated from my brethren, I found it a real companion.

Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., HAROLD F. FREDSELL, Moderator.
Detroit, Mich.

From the Philippines

SIR: Here in the Philippines your magazine is indispensable wherever one lives and works. Let me commend you most heartily for printing the sermon "Christ's Call to Youth" (Jan.) by Alfred W. Swan. It has a special appeal and challenge to the millions of young people in Asia. Here in our country, we will take up the challenge to "give everything we have" for the Master's use.

Silliman University, ELIEZER D. MAPANAO.
Dumaguete City, P. I.

Robots

SIR: In your December issue Herbert Booth Smith asks, "Will robots perform weddings and baptisms and officiate in the sacred offices of the dead?" Come, come, now, Brother Smith, haven't you seen and heard that already? And preaching sermons, too! C. WILLARD FETTER.

First Evangelical United Brethren,
Akron, Ohio.

The Pause . . .

SIR: The November Pulpit has just arrived, and as usual I browsed through it before reading the articles and the sermons, pausing here and there in joyous anticipation of the meat in those sermons and articles. Coming to page 22, I was warned of "The Pause Which Does Not Refresh," and I did not pause because I knew that the warning was true.

The purpose of my writing is to suggest that you retain this warning in each number, replacing the monthly title "Pulpit Patter" with the more accurate heading, "The Pause Which Does Not Refresh."

First Methodist, NOEL H. CARDWELL.
Roosevelt, N. Y.

Corn

SIR: To add to the corn on Enslin:

The "Patter" by some is assailed,
While others as "great" it have hailed;
I do not quite see
Just why this should be,
'Cept that some hate to learn they're derailed.

Peace Evangelical & Reformed, W. F. SIEMERS.
New Salem, N. D.

Less Than the Cost of Typing

SIR: Morton Enslin's December column, describing the offiers (for a price) of "homiletic materials" or D.D. de-

grees that come to him through the mails, reports something which I suppose has happened to most ministers at one time or another.

Recently I received this timely information from a "school": "Have there not been times, at the end of a hard and trying day, when you would have welcomed conveniently arranged homiletical material? . . . Our unique service . . . is for pastors only and is strictly confidential"! Another selling point was that this "service" was available at "a yearly price of less than the cost of typing."

Enslin should be comforted to know that he is not the only one "on all the sucker lists extant."

WILLIAM S. SPARKS.

Mt. Lookout Methodist,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Dust of the Earth

By Charles H. Schmitz

Broadcasting and Film Commission, National Council of Churches

AND the Lord God formed man
From the dust of the earth.
The lowliest stuff.
The most unpromising substance—
Molded to receive his breath.
Man—a living soul!

O Man! Dust thou art; not gold, but *dust;*
Not rich, but cheap; not scarce, but plentiful;
Without price in any market . . .
There are no quotations on dust!
Damager, Disturber, Disintegrator,
Target of heaven and hell—
Dust thou art.

Black dust.
Black as the oozing, spongy muck
Of the soft swamplands
Growing celery, potatoes, cabbages.
Inky, sooty, black.
Dust thou art.

Red dust.
Red as the burnt clay
That Iowa knows.
Sun-tinted red, dull red,
Blood red.
Red as the American Red Man.
Dust thou art.

Yellow dust.
Yellow as the prairie
That the rancher knows,
Yielding little, giving grudgingly.
Pale yellow.
Yellow as the Eastern man.
Dust thou art.

Brown dust.
Brown as the earth
Of the plot in your yard,
Giving much from very little.
Dirty, earthy brown.
Brown as the sun-baked man of Arabia.
Dust thou art.

White dust.
White as the sands
On the shores of the seas.
Deceptively clean and smooth—yet
Bland, bleached, betraying sand,
Thinly grained as the white man.
Dust thou art.

Gray dust.
Something of black and white
Between the spectrum,
Sprouting the gnarled greasewood tree,
Covering a deserted playground.
Part of all dust, blend of all races.
Still—dust thou art.

O Man!
Burn this in your calloused flesh:
Dust thou art, to dust returneth.
Dust, yes dust, without which
No sun would rise,
No rain would fall,
No rainbow's arch,
No sunset glow.

To dust all men return,
Rising as the dust rises,
Falling as the dust falls,
A painter's model. A warmonger's prize.
Great and small; in everything, over everything.
Master and Slave. Father and Child.
Black, red, yellow, brown, white, gray dust.
But still dust, dusty dust—yet hopeful dust.

To dust all men return,
That they may be one,
Working together in death
If not in life.
Urged by earthquake and torrent,
Rather than by peace and good will.
Compelled by death and time,
Unimpelled by Life and Immortality.

And the Lord God formed man
From the dust of the earth,
The lowliest stuff.
The most unpromising dirt beneath his feet
Received the Master Potter's touch
By his breath—a Soul.

Dust thou art—
Living in hope of Him,
Him whose dusty body was broken
To be born a new body
Out of the dust
A Cradle . . . A Cross . . . An Empty Grave . . .

Resurrection!

The minister and the funeral director will each find this a helpful article

Proprieties in Bereavement

By Alfred Grant Walton

MINISTERS and morticians should learn how to get along with each other and yet often they are in conflict. This conflict does not express itself in outward hostility but rather in different psychological attitudes. The funeral director is concerned with physical matters and a proper physical interment. He wishes to please the family who find it hard to part with their loved one and who wish to show all proper respect. Thus the mortician is concerned with mahogany caskets, metallic linings and cement vaults. He wants the body to look natural. So he gives much attention to cosmetology and the embalming art. The minister on the other hand is concerned with spiritual realities and he rebels against the materialistic emphasis which morticians stress. It is the ongoing life of the spirit and not the disposition of the body which he considers important.

Some ministers look upon morticians simply as business men engaged like any other merchant in selling their wares. Contrariwise, there are funeral directors who look upon the clergyman as a kind of a nuisance, a necessary but bothersome appurtenance to be treated as impersonally as the air-conditioning unit, the folding chairs or the limousines. Then again conflict asserts itself when the minister comes to a funeral in an authoritative mood, like a self-appointed commander-in-chief who wants to take over the situation in its entirety. Such men embarrass the funeral director and their attitude is a downright aggravation. Every funeral service has in it this potential subconscious conflict between the two persons who have the greatest responsibility for making easy the final separation.

Personally I am very sympathetic toward funeral directors and feel that ministers should do everything in their power to assist them. They are engaged in a legitimate and necessary profession. They are as anxious to please their client as a lawyer or a physician. In doing their work they are restricted by the wishes of the families which they serve and they have to deal with persons under great emotional strain. Ministers should bear these facts in mind.

Areas of Cooperation

Some undertakers commercialize their profession and prey upon the ignorance of families in bereavement to charge exhorbitant prices. They encourage the bereaved to go to unnecessary expense in order to "do things just right," carefully inquiring beforehand whether there is any life insurance or other funds to meet the cost. In all honesty it must be said that this is not the standard of the better funeral establishments and all the national organizations of morticians have codes of ethics against such practices. Reliable undertakers have no desire to gouge the public, to sell a casket beyond the means of the family or to lay an additional financial burden upon those already under the heavy expense of illness.

Ministers may well keep out of the physical arrangements for funerals and leave such matters to those most directly involved. It is desirable that we move always toward a more Christian burial, but changes can come only through enlightened public opinion. Meanwhile the clergy should cooperate with morticians in every possible way and should help them do their work effectively. If there are funeral practices which are particularly offensive, the clergyman may tactfully speak of such matters but he should not appear in the role of a dictator.

When a minister arrives to conduct a funeral service he should be treated with the dignity due his profession. If possible he should be given a private place where he can put on his vestments and where he can be by himself until the service begins. I have been compelled to put on my robes in the business offices of the funeral establishment where clerks and stenographers were at work, in narrow corridors where I have been seen by all, and even in a storeroom cluttered with candlesticks, kneeling stools and a carelessly covered corpse on the floor.

When the service starts the funeral director should be as inconspicuous as possible. It may be necessary for him to be in the rear of the chapel to see that late arrivals are seated, but he should never stand around pompously in the role of a master of ceremonies. At such a time the best funeral director just "fades away." I have conducted hundreds of funerals and only in the rarest cases have all friends arrived on time. This tardiness is a great annoyance. Late entrances and the rattling of chairs can nearly ruin the service itself. The director can help by having vacant chairs near the doors where late comers may be seated as quietly as possible. One of the unpardonable sins is the pompous ushering of late comers down in front while the service is going on.

Music

Before the service begins music helps greatly to cover up the silence and the solemnity of the situation. Expenditure of money for such a purpose is definitely legitimate and need not be looked upon as an unnecessary "extra." When there is a recording instrument, such music is acceptable, but the occasion is not one for the presentation of a concert either at the beginning or the end of the service. I have sat for a long time after a service waiting impatiently for the funeral director to complete his collection of choice records. Music should be incidental both at the beginning and the end. Vocal music in the service itself may well be omitted because of the unusual emotional strain it creates. In many instances such singing is done without accompaniment and often is mediocre. If the family insists upon vocal music, a soloist from one's own church is preferable.

There is a general disposition to shorten the funeral service. This is most commendable. A service should not be so brief as to give the impression of being hurried; it should not be so long as to create an emotional strain. About fifteen minutes is a desirable length. The minister should always bear in mind that the funeral service is for the living and not for the dead. Its purpose is not to comfort

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ALFRED GRANT WALTON is pastor of the Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational Church in Brooklyn, the second largest Congregational church in the United States, with 4,000 members. A 1914 graduate of Oberlin School of Theology, he has served pastorates in three states other than New York and has held a number of denominational responsibilities, including the presidency of his church's board of home missions. For the past 16 years he has been on the staff of radio and television preachers of the National Council of Churches. He has published several collections of poetry.

the family by a review of the life of the deceased, all of which is known, but to strengthen the sorrowing with Christian faith and hope. Fulsome eulogies are obnoxious; even the more modest variety might well be omitted altogether. Every life speaks for itself with its own eloquence. Nothing that the minister may say can add or detract. However a minister may properly make some passing reference to the deceased in his prayer and in this way avoid a wholly impersonal service.

All that the minister says and does should be marked with earnestness and sincerity. Nothing is worse than for a minister to read the funeral service lugubriously as though he were proclaiming the day of impending doom, nor should his face portray such a mood. Dr. Charles Spurgeon once told a group of theological students that when they spoke of heaven their faces should light up with a gladness and a holy radiance, but he added, "When you speak of hell—well, your regular face will do." There is a wealth of truth in this anecdote. Ministers would do well to speak "naturally" on all occasions. The so-called

(Continued on page 23)

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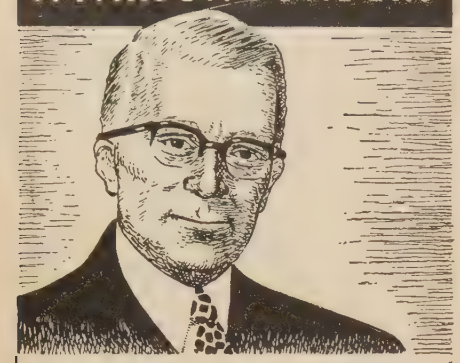

"I'd like to--but I can't afford it"—replies the preacher who is urged to make sensible provision for the future. It sounds conclusive except that we nearly all manage to afford to buy what we consider to be a necessity.

But the more disturbing factor demands consideration. Do you know what it costs to protect your family? Sometimes it means questioning an axiom to suggest that the report of the high cost is like the rumor of Mark Twain's death —grossly exaggerated.

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"More than a Business— an Institution"

Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'On Keeping Lent'

ONCE again the candy manufacturers and the managers of movie theaters have begun to shiver, for once more Lent is upon us. Last year, I think it was, just prior to Ash Wednesday, I chanced to be in a group discussing with varying enthusiasm the coming season. Two men—one clerical, the other lay—announced their intentions. The former had decided, he told us, to abstain rigorously throughout the 40 days from adding a single drop of water to his whisky; the latter countered that he had vowed he would give up going to church until Easter was safely past. A third, overhearing the conversation, remarked that it appeared to him that once again a biblical word had been fulfilled: the sons of this world still were manifestly wiser than the sons of light. I record this incident severely and without further comment.

A little time ago I chanced to read the following words in an article in Schaff Herzog's *Religious Encyclopedia*, published some 40 years ago: "Among Evangelical churches of Great Britain and the United States observance of Holy Week is as a whole largely disregarded." Unless the words "as a whole" were to be interpreted in what my father used to style a "Pickwickian sense," the verdict could scarcely be repeated today, with noonday services increasingly frequent throughout the whole period but particularly during the concluding two weeks, with Maundy Thursday evening communions, with three-hour devotions on Good Friday, and the numerous other ecclesiastical near-niceties fast becoming the order of the day (or season) no less for Baptists and Presbyterians than for supposedly more ecclesiastical-minded Episcopalians and Lutherans.

But we do it in no archaic or dust-encrusted way. We are strictly modern. Maundy Thursday is, despite its not-too-attractive title, especially beloved by nonconformists with a yearning for ecclesiastical elegance. To be sure, washing the feet of the poor, which was the practice from the fourth century on, especially for ecclesiastical dignitaries—popes, cardinals, and Catholic sovereigns—has long since waned. It continued in England until the time of James II, who washed the feet of as many poor as he was years old. But Elizabeth I had given it a death blow, for she, whose devotion to things of the spirit may perhaps be open to question, cannily saw to it that, before her humble and penitent ministrations were performed, the said feet were thoroughly scrubbed in warm water and fragrant herbs by her yeomen. *Sic transit gloria pietatis.* William III delegated the act to his almoner, and since 1754 it has been entirely dispensed with. Maundy Thursday pennies were more convenient to distribute and were probably more welcome to the deserving poor.

For us Maundy Thursday evening is peculiarly appropriate for an extra-special communion service. To be sure, this practice, which had been sporadic since the Third Council of Carthage, was roundly forbidden by the Quinsext or Trullen Council (A.D. 692). Perhaps because of its universal disfavor in the eyes of the ecclesiastical regulars, dissenters find an increasing satisfaction in performing it at this time. Here it is possible to be both liturgical and fancifully traditional, but with absolutely no fear of being accused of standing as penitents in the snows of Canossa.

The other item especially beloved by nonconformists is the three-hour devotion or vigil on Good Friday. This is of distinctly recent vintage, for it does not appear to antedate 1867, when it was introduced in Peru by the Jesuit missionary Alonso Messia. But the seed fell on fruitful earth. A couple of years ago in Philadelphia a fund was raised to be used in applying pressure upon recalcitrant merchants in that city. They were asked to shut their establishments for three hours, preferably from 1 to 4 p.m.; but if for any reason this was impossible or financially unwise, for three hours at a time more convenient and less exhausting.

Undoubtedly many find profound values in this season of rites and abstentions. Heaven knows that there are plenty of things from which we might abstain with profit. It is also beyond gainsaying that there are many folk, equally awe-struck before the terrible and ageless story about which these practices have wrapped themselves like mistletoe, who find little or no profit in the annual pageant of abstentions through skilfully devised substitutions, precluded by a Mardi

Bereavement

(Continued from page 21)

"ministerial tone" is an abomination at any time.

One of the most irritating incidents at funeral obsequies occurs when the funeral director strides forward at the conclusion of the religious service and makes a public announcement. "This concludes the service," his sonorous voice states the self-evident fact. "Interment will be at Evergreen cemetery," he continues, though he knows that only the family are planning to go. "Those who would like to look upon Mr. ——— for the last time," he says, "may do so now." How about an open casket anyway? More properly, after the benediction has been given the director may indicate to a few of the guests that everything is over and in this way terminate the service quietly and without ostentation.

Why Black?

There are many who are strongly opposed to the open casket. Some day this practice may be abolished, but it is one that cannot easily be changed. The wishes of the family should be paramount.

In some situations the family may prefer to be seated in an adjacent room. To me it seems more natural to have the family sit with their friends as they would if friends were to drop in at their homes. But if members of the family choose to be by themselves, the conclusion of the service is the best time for friends to speak their words of sympathy. It is not advisable to do so before the service begins.

Much might be said regarding the proper funeral dress. It is to be hoped that the time will come when black apparel will no longer be considered indispensable for a proper indication of grief. Black suits, black neckties or black bands on light suits surround bereavement with a depressing mood. Women add to the burden of their responsibility by hurrying to dress shops to secure black dresses they will seldom if ever wear again. Funeral directors not only wear black but sometimes old fashioned cut-a-ways or an occasional "Prince Albert" almost like a badge of office. Death is a natural part of life itself. It is an inevitable experience. Everyone might well dress as he is accustomed to do normally, as he would if the deceased were alive and with them. Wearing apparel at funerals should be constrained only by dignity and good taste.

One problem confronting ministers and morticians alike has to do with ministerial fees. Honorarium is a gentler word. Some funeral directors make inquiry from the family regarding their wishes in this respect and send a check according to instructions. No over-all rule for funeral fees is applicable. Every situation must be handled individually. Some fees are included in the undertaker's bill and are charged against the estate; some come from the family. But the minister is at a loss to know what brother or sister or uncle or aunt is assuming the funeral expenses and who should be thanked or to whom the fee should be returned. There are clergymen who have an agreement with their churches whereby all fees are turned over to the church treasurer. Some make announcement to their congregations that no fees will be accepted from any church members. Yet this very an-

(Continued on page 26)

Gras and climaxed by a vulgar display of finery in the most conspicuous places—a Christian church or an Atlantic City boardwalk. Each to his taste.

The loveliest Easter I have ever spent was in Jerusalem 20 years ago. I did not attend the services—sunrise at the "garden tomb," pageantry at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or any of the others. Instead I spent the whole day quite alone on the Mount of Olives, reading once again the matchless story and trying to relive it in the Sabbath calm. It would be hard to convince me that a lovelier or more rewarding observance would have been possible.

Sharing in the Triumph of Easter

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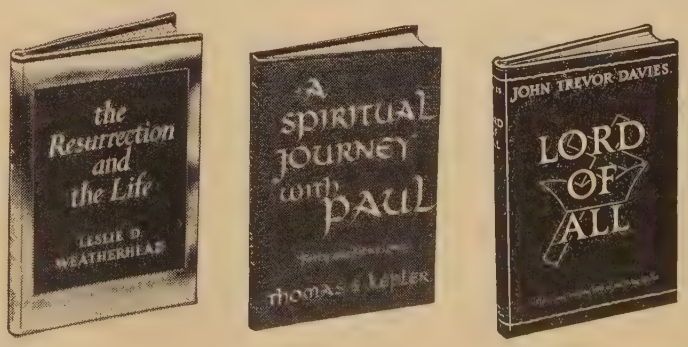

Ballot for the Pulpit's Editorial Associates

Several months ago the editors of The Pulpit invited their readers to nominate the names of contemporary preachers to serve on the Pulpit's Board of Editorial Associates. The following ministers received the highest number of nominations within their respective groupings. Since it seems advisable to limit our board membership to about 30 we need the judgment of our readers in making the final selection. Cast your ballot below and mail by April 15, 1953 to:

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Baptist
(Vote for five)

- ☐ Theodore F. Adams
- ☐ Gene Bartlett
- ☐ Clarence T. Cranford
- ☐ Edwin T. Dahlberg
- ☐ Frank B. Fagerburg
- ☐ Mordecai Johnson
- ☐ Benjamin E. Mays
- ☐ Robert J. McCracken
- ☐ Harold C. Phillips
- ☐ Edwin McNeill Poteat
- ☐ Edward H. Pruden

Church of the Brethren
(Vote for one)

- ☐ Paul M. Robinson
- ☐ Harry K. Zeller, Jr.

Church of the Nazarene
(Vote for one)

- ☐ Russell DeLong
- ☐ A. Milton Smith

Community
(Vote for one)

- ☐ Roy A. Burkart
- ☐ Fred E. Luchs
- ☐ Howard Thurman

Presbyterian
(Vote for three)

- ☐ George A. Buttrick
- ☐ Edward J. R. Elson
- ☐ Louis H. Evans
- ☐ E. G. Homrighausen
- ☐ William H. Hudnut, Jr.
- ☐ Donald MacLeod
- ☐ John A. Redhead
- ☐ James H. Robinson
- ☐ Charles Templeton

Congregational-Christian
(Vote for two)

- ☐ Carl Heath Kopf
- ☐ Vere V. Loper
- ☐ Aaron N. Meckel
- ☐ Frederick M. Meek
- ☐ Roy M. Pearson
- ☐ Liston Pope

Disciples
(Vote for two)

- ☐ Hampton Adams
- ☐ Jack Finegan
- ☐ Perry Gresham
- ☐ Curtis Jones
- ☐ Harold L. Lunger
- ☐ Dwight E. Stevenson

Eastern Orthodox
(Vote for one)

- ☐ George A. Mastrantonis
- ☐ John Trutza
- ☐ Alexander Warnecke

Episcopal
(Vote for two)

- ☐ Karl Morgan Block
- ☐ Gardiner M. Day
- ☐ Theodore P. Ferris
- ☐ Charles Francis Hall
- ☐ James A. Pike
- ☐ Samuel Shoemaker

Evangelical and Reformed
(Vote for one)

- ☐ Roland H. Pantermuehl
- ☐ Karl H. A. Rest
- ☐ F. W. Schroeder
- ☐ Robert Stanger
- ☐ C. W. Wingert

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(Vote for one)

- ☐ E. E. Burtner
- ☐ Philip O. Deever
- ☐ C. Willard Fetter

Lutheran
(Vote for four)

- ☐ Harold R. Albert
- ☐ Oscar A. Anderson
- ☐ Conrad Bergendoff
- ☐ Oscar A. Blackwelder
- ☐ O. A. Gieseman
- ☐ Elmer S. Hjortland
- ☐ T. A. Kantonen
- ☐ Ralph W. Loew
- ☐ Clifford Ansgar Nelson
- ☐ Paul E. Scherer
- ☐ Joseph A. Sittler, Jr.
- ☐ Reuben K. Youngdahl

Methodist
(Vote for five)

- ☐ Harold A. Bosley
- ☐ Henry Hitt Crane
- ☐ Albert E. Day
- ☐ Gaston Foote
- ☐ J. Wallace Hamilton
- ☐ E. Stanley Jones
- ☐ Gerald H. Kennedy
- ☐ Umphrey Lee
- ☐ Norman Vincent Peale
- ☐ Richard C. Raines
- ☐ John H. Rustin
- ☐ Ralph A. Sockman
- ☐ Marshall Steel

Unitarian
(Vote for one)

- ☐ Homer Jack
- ☐ A. Powell Davies

Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *The Cross and War Morality*

THE WHOLE of society in our time is shaped and dominated by a war morality. Christian ethics have been badly shell shocked so that they mumble on, often even from Christian pulpits, in a pathetic stupor. This has resulted from the awful impact upon two generations made by repeated mobilizations of the Christian world for killing by all known modern methods. This continuing all-out commitment of Christian souls to violence, together with their reconciliation to the consequences of mass killing, has proved terrifyingly devastating to both personal and social morality. Wars and the preparation for wars, the discipline of all life under a war economy, the adoption by society of a war philosophy, the surrender of spirits to a war psychology, all add up to the conduct of life in accordance with a war morality.

Almost unconsciously we subject the hard facts of the gospel to the softening process of the ethics of war, and Christ is made to march and look quite too much like the ordinary respectable one of us dressed up in fighting garb and girded to do battle for a nation. These are serious matters for all Christians, especially as once again they move toward the day of the cross.—*Dwight F. Putman, President, Central Pennsylvania Synod, United Lutheran Church.*

• *Christ Is Risen!*

A WELL-KNOWN journalist tells of listening to a Russian lecturer in Moscow who attacked the Christian faith for 90 minutes and proved to his own satisfaction, at least, that faith in God was a dying survival of capitalism. When he finished he invited discussion. A shy, timid, young man—a typical village priest—stepped forward and asked permission to speak. "Not more than 5 minutes," the speaker reminded him. "I shall not be so long," replied the priest. He ascended the platform and addressed the audience: "Brothers and sisters, Christ is risen!" As one man the audience replied, "He is risen indeed!" the familiar response of Russian believers. "I have finished," said the priest, "I have nothing more to say." —*Roland E. Turnbull, First Baptist, Alton, Ill.*

• *Lacework of the Easter Story*

WHEN Leonardo da Vinci finished painting the Last Supper he invited all his students to see it unveiled. When they saw it for the first time they gasped a chorus of "Oh's" and "Ah's." The students then began to look at the exquisite lace table cloth, the product of their master's genius. They all spoke to him about the artistic lacework. Leonardo reached for his brush, dipped it in his paints and with one full stroke wiped out the lacework. He then turned to his students and said, "You fools, look at the Master's face!"

In a real sense this cannot be Easter for anyone of us unless we look at the Master's face. If we concentrate on the lacework of the Easter story we are lost. If the millinery splendor that adorns our bodies costs us more than what we give to the telling of the Black Friday and Easter story, then we are still looking at the lacework. If the beauty of the church or the pageantry absorbs our interest and attention, then we shall miss everlasting life.—*John G. Simmons, St. Matthew's Lutheran, North Hollywood, Calif.*

Pulpit Calendar

Mar. 1—2nd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 8—3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 15—4th Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 22—Passion Sunday.
Mar. 29-Apr. 4—Holy Week.
Apr. 2—Maundy Thursday.
Apr. 3—Good Friday.
Apr. 5—Easter.
Apr. 12—1st Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 19—2nd Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 26—3rd Sunday after Easter.
May 3—4th Sunday after Easter.
May 3-10—National Family Week.
May 10—5th Sunday after Easter. Festival of the Christian Home.
May 14—Ascension Day.
May 17—Sunday after the Ascension.
May 24—Whitsunday. The Festival of Pentecost. Christian Unity Sunday.
May 30—Memorial Day.
May 31—Trinity Sunday.

SEASONS: Lent; Easter; Ascension; Pentecost; Trinity.

ALTAR COLORS: Lent, Violet; Good Friday, Black; Easter, White; Ascension, White; Pentecost, Red; Trinity Sunday, White.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

• *A Definition of Kindness*

KINDNESS is like behavior of the little girl who pulled her crippled four-year-old brother in a wagon to the corner near the railroad tracks. His weakened limbs could not hold him, so she got behind him and hoisted him up. Then she drove her head into the small of his back, put her arms around him and held him up to watch for the swift diesel-powered City of Denver. Later a neighbor asked the little girl, "Why do you do that?" "He cannot walk and he likes to see the train," the child answered. "But," the neighbor said, "you can't see it." "I have seen it," the girl said, "before he became sick."—*Bryant M. Kirkland, First Presbyterian, Haddonfield, N. J.*

• *The Day that Changed The World*

EASTER changes the world not only because of what happened long ago, but also because the power of God which brought Jesus from the death is always at work in the world. Easter shows that there is a spring of life-giving water welling up within humanity all the time. Seemingly dying and dead things everywhere can reveal a resurrection.

All this has meaning for your life and mine. We may feel we have lost touch with God. We may feel that we are in the grip of some habit or sin. We may know a great tiredness and exhaustion of spirit and wonder how we can carry on. The resurrection is a fact. God can raise the dead. He can do it now by the power of the resurrection.—*Alan Walker, Methodist, Waverley, Australia.*

• *Jesus' Four Basic Assumptions*

JESUS staked his life on four basic assumptions: First, that there is a Supreme Being; second, that that Supreme Being has some purpose in what he is doing; third, that if a man will, he can fling in his life with that purpose and help it forward; fourth, that if he does, not only will he make his maximum contribution to the good of all men, and discover a new glory in his life, but also he will find that he does not have to do it alone—there is a power greater than himself available to aid him.—*Gerald Breen Switzer, Central United Church, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.*

• *The Resurrection and Our Faith*

THE conviction which possessed the first Christian community is our conviction, namely, Jesus Christ is alive for evermore. Someone has pointed out that belief in the resurrection of Jesus is not an appendage to the Christian faith—it *is* the Christian faith. The Gospels do not explain the resurrection; it is the resurrection which alone explains the Gospels—and the church.—*Alan Walker, Methodist, Waverley, Australia.*

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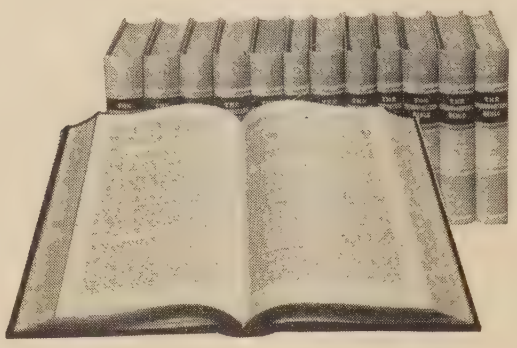

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Bereavement

(Continued from page 23)

nouncement contains the suggestion that one might possibly be expected. Returning a fee may give offense to the family since it suggests that the family cannot afford the gift or that the deceased has been made an object of charity.

One minister whom I know received a hundred dollars for conducting a service and used it to purchase a bulletin board for his church. Later he told the donor what he had done with the money. A second hundred dollar check came to him immediately with the specific instruction that he should keep it himself. One of the first fees ever offered me for a funeral service was returned to the family with a friendly letter stating that I did not wish to accept a fee for conducting funerals, only to have the money sent back by another member of the household. Since then I have discarded any iron-clad rule. Often a fee can be returned in good grace. Sometimes it may please the family to be advised that it is to be put to some charitable use. Sometimes it must be kept. Certainly when a family has no connection with the church, and only the most casual interest in religion, the minister may properly accept an honorarium and use it as he desires. If a thousand dollars can be spent for a casket and $250 for a floral blanket, a gift to the clergyman who is called to serve strangers is not inappropriate.

Memorial Gifts

It will not be easy to get away from the use of flowers at funerals. No florist would ever encourage such a program and unquestionably flowers bring a large measure of comfort. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent annually in this way. In support of the present practices it might be pointed out that some who find it difficult to express their sympathy with spoken words use flowers as a compensating medium for doing so. It is a gratifying custom that is growing lately for families in bereavement to indicate that instead of sending flowers friends may send a donation to the deceased's favorite charity. A friend of mine who passed away left an instruction of this kind and over a thousand dollars was received by a cancer hospital in which he was interested. A single spray of flowers from the immediate family is quite enough.

Funeral directors might well spend a little more time arranging flowers carefully at the cemetery instead of throwing them haphazardly. City morticians are worse offenders in this respect than funeral directors in smaller communities. The practice of leveling the casket to the ground and completely blanketing it with flowers is to be recommended. The mortician may do much to take away one of the hardest moments of interment by fol-

lowing this method and by having the family leave before the grave is filled.

Some day we will be much more intelligent in our funeral customs. We will evolve practices that will subordinate the physical emphasis and enhance the spiritual. When death occurs a good method is for the family privately to take the remains of the deceased to the cemetery or the crematory with only the immediate relatives and the minister present to see that proper interment occurs. At a later time a memorial service may be held without the expensive casket, the extravagant display of flowers and the "viewing of the remains." At such an occasion there can be far greater latitude for the expression of friendship and of faith. Favorite hymns of the deceased may be sung. Someone may speak of his particular tastes, his community service, his devotion to the church and all that endeared him to others. The group can meet as friends to honor a friend and to recall a wholesome and beloved memory. But we must seek change gradually, not completely ignoring present traditions, but stressing life rather than death.

• *Come Just As You Are*

THE title of this sermon comes to me from observing the teenagers who live in and romp through our home. It seems that one of the most hilarious affairs the young people can have is a "Come As You Are" party.

Let us use this idea in relation to the second coming of Christ. As I understand the Scriptures, the second coming will take the whole world by surprise. We shall come as we are.

The parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids indicates that some will be prepared and some will be quite unprepared and filled with dismay.

We should prepare now to meet our Lord. Let us make a comparison with purchasing insurance. You must be in good health to be able to purchase life insurance. Or you may buy fire insurance for your household goods when conditions are normal in your neighborhood. It is unlikely that you could dash to an agent and purchase fire insurance after your neighbor's house catches fire.

We do not propose to scare people into becoming Christians. We realize that there are higher motives than fear for becoming Christians, and yet it is sensible to prepare now to meet God regardless of the hour.

One of the grand old hymns says: "When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there." How about it? Will you be ready? When the great call comes, it will be, "Come—just as you are."—*Frank W. Sprague, First Christian, Neodesha, Kan.*

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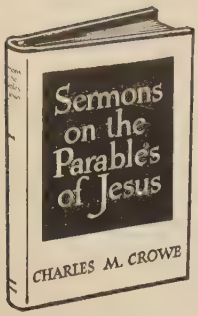

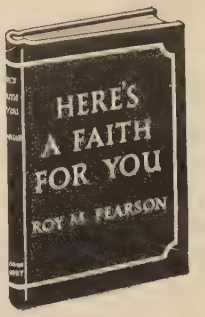

SERMONS on the PARABLES of JESUS

CHARLES M. CROWE

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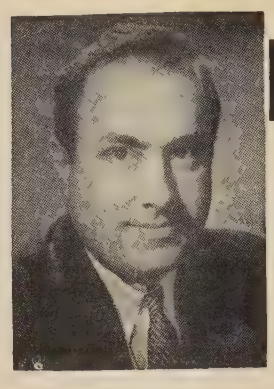

Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Anniversaries in 1953

THE year 1953 is hardly notable for famous musical anniversaries. The translators fare better than the poets and composers, with few rare exceptions.

This year marks the 800th anniversary of the death of Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153), the monk through whom the Middle Ages "found their noblest expression." He wrote the hymns translated "O sacred head now wounded" and "Jesus, the very thought of thee" (by Edward Gaswall) or "Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts" (by Ray Palmer).

Methodists have already projected ambitious plans to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the birth of founder John Wesley (1703-1791). The brother of prolific Charles Wesley was a poet and translator in his own right, as Methodist hymnals attest. Most of them contain John's translations: "Jesus, thy boundless love to me," "Thou hidden love of God, whose height," "Jesus, thy blood and righteousness" and "O thou, to whose all-searching sight."

William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878) of "Thanatopsis" fame, whose one hymn "Thou whose unmeasured temple stands" is widely acclaimed, died 75 years ago. This is the 100th anniversary of the birth of William George Tarrant (1853-1928), the English Unitarian leader who wrote "Marching with the heroes" and "With happy voices ringing."

So also is 1953 the 75th anniversary of the death of three famous translators and the 50th anniversary of the passing of four "one tune" composers. Jane Montgomery Campbell (1817-1878) produced the English version of Matthias Claudius' poem "We plow the fields and scatter" which has become a Thanksgiving classic. Children love its familiar refrain:

> All good gifts around us
> Are sent from heaven above;
> Then thank the Lord, O thank
> The Lord, for all his love.

Among the translations of German hymns by gifted Catherine Winkworth (1829-1878) are "Now thank we all our God," "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," "If thou but suffer God to guide thee," "Blessed Jesus, at thy word," "Light of light, enlighten me," "Ah, dearest Jesus, holy child" and "All my heart this night rejoices." In fact 21 of her translations are included in the new hymnal of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, a high tribute to her scholarship and poetic gifts.

Edward Caswall (1814-1878) is best known for his translations "When morning gilds the skies," which some authorities date 1853, and "Jesus, the very thought of thee." John Mason Neale (1818-1866) published his *Carols for Christmastide* a century ago in 1853. Included in this volume was his "Good Christian men, rejoice." That same year he translated "The day is past and over."

Four composers, each known for only one outstanding tune, died in 1903, 50 years ago. They were Welshman Joseph Parry (1841-1903), composer of *Aberystwyth;* Samuel A. Ward (1847-1903) of New Jersey, to whose tune *Materna* we sing both "America the beautiful" and "O mother dear Jerusalem"; Spencer Lane (1843-1903) who composed the tune *Penitence,* to which "In the hour of trial" is universally sung; and Herbert S. Oakeley (1830-1903) who composed his tune *Abends* for the hymn "Sun of my soul" as a substitute for the familiar tune *Hursley* which he disliked.

Follow, Follow, Ye Who Love Him

Tune: Hymn to Joy

Follow, follow, ye who love him:
  Follow in the path he trod.
He is ever on before us—
  On the way that leads to God.
Follow him, the Lord of glory,
  Christ who leads the hosts of light;
Let us close the ranks of battle,
  Storm with him the forts of night.

He is leading on the struggle
  'Gainst the very gates of hell:
They shall fall before our onset—
  He hath said it—All is well.
Come, then, comrades, he is calling.
  Forward now, to where he stands
Battle lines are earth encircling:
  Crown him! Crown him! All ye lands.

JOHN W. SHACKFORD.

Preachers in Print

Lenten Reading

TWO recent books will greatly enrich the minister's Lenten reading and preaching. The first is **F. W. Dillistone's** ★★★*Jesus Christ and His Cross* (Westminster, $2.50). This reviewer always approaches a volume on the cross with mingled emotions. Will this book lead me to a deeper understanding of Jesus' death, or will its theological bias form the kind of mental block which will force me to discard the book after reading the first page? These pages are filled with solid spiritual meat. The author's treatment will probably not satisfy the extreme liberal or the ultra-conservative, but the great majority of today's preachers will find it extremely stimulating and rewarding.

Dr. Dillistone was born and educated in England. He has served parishes in the Church of England and has been a professor of theology at London College of Divinity, Wycliffe College, Toronto, and the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge, Mass.

Of special value to the pastor are the six chapters which interpret the mind of the early church as it sought to understand the meaning of Jesus' death on the cross. The writer describes these as Savior-Hero, Shepherd, Son, Sin Bearer, High Priest and Servant. An introductory chapter on "The Mystery of the Cross" and the concluding treatment on "The Glory of the Cross" are also of such a high caliber that every preacher's pulpit utterances will be enriched by the author's meaningful and resourceful interpretation.

Another book of great potential worth during these Lenten days is **Albert E. Day's** ★*An Autobiography of Prayer* (Harper, $2.50). Preachers will find this book valuable according to their sense of need for help and guidance in this field. The volume grows out of the author's pastoral ministry of nearly 40 years and expresses his insights and conclusions as they relate to the Christian's search for more effective channels of communication with God. The fact that this volume is in The Pulpit's top 10 "books preachers are reading" indicates the confidence with which Dr. Day is held by his fellow pastors. This is his eighth volume.

ALTON M. MOTTER.

ROUNDUP

★★RELIGIOUS FAITH, LANGUAGE, AND KNOWLEDGE. By **Ben F. Kimpel.** Philosophical Library, $2.75. This book is a challenge to the philosophy of empiricism. The issue is joined with empirical theories which reduce language to an impression of experience with no possibility of interpreting any reality external to experience. What is at stake in such theories, the author shows, is not merely an academic problem but religious life itself. Dr. Kimpel makes an admirably concise analysis of antitheological theories of language, and counters them with a theory which instead of repudiating the Christian conception of many may be regarded as a "preface to a theology." It is cogent enough to make an excellent text for courses and classes in philosophy of religion. It may well acquire a permanent place among theological textbooks. — *Ernest Marshall Howse, Bloor Street United, Toronto, Can.*

LORD OF ALL LIFE. By **A. Ian Burnett.** Rinehart, $2.50. A conservative Scottish Presbyterian, born in Africa of missionary parents, occupying one of Canada's leading pulpits, offers 21 sermons about Christ. Almost devoid of human-interest illustrations and often failing in attempts to make the commonplace sublime, the book is quite different from most contemporary U. S. preaching. Not without value for a fresh and different approach to a Lenten series or for personal devotions, but you can't snatch one of these sermons on the run on Saturday night for Sunday morning delivery!—*Herman J. Kregel, Chaplain, HQ, 40th Div. Artillery.*

P. T. FORSYTH, THE MAN AND HIS WORK. By **W. L. Bradley.** Independent Press, London. A. R. Allenson, Chicago, $3.50. Rediscovered 10 years ago, P. T. Forsyth is the subject of two published doctoral theses, the one here mentioned and Westminster Press' P. T. FORSYTH: PROPHET FOR TODAY, by **Robert McAfee Brown.** Forsyth is thought to be the forerunner of contemporary neo-orthodoxy. Bradley's volume is concerned with Forsyth's early thought and his emphasis upon the centrality of the doctrine of grace. Bradley concludes, "It is likely that the present interest in Forsyth will decline, but it is unlikely that he will be forgotten. Theology has caught up with him now."—*Wilhelmus B. Bryan, Minneapolis School of Art, Minneapolis, Minn.*

A WORLD IN WAITING. By **E. Melville Aitken.** Ryerson Press, Toronto. Price not stated. Thirteen sermons by the forceful minister of First United Church, Hamilton, Ont. Good, solid material, well illustrated and well thought out.—*C. Willard Fetter, First E.U.B., Akron, Ohio.*

★THE OLIVE PELL BIBLE. Edited by **Olive Pell.** Exposition Press, $3.00. Mrs. Pell has selected those portions of the Bible which, in her opinion after 12 years of labor, have the greatest spiritual value for the average reader. This has resulted in an attractive volume about one-fifth the size of the regular Bible. This King James condensation should be a useful aid to many shut-ins and to those who do not have the patience or will not take the time to read the entire Bible.—*Alton M. Motter, Associate Editor,* The Pulpit.

★ SHAPE OF SUNDAY. By **Virginia Douglas Dawson** and **Betty Douglas Wilson.** Houghton-Mifflin, $3.50. An interesting, intimate biography of Lloyd Douglas by his daughters. It presents a picture of family devotion refreshing for our times. The book reveals the progress of the son of a country pastor, through college, seminary into his first small parish and on to the Washington, D. C. pastorate where he found himself out of sympathy with his denomination. Then to Y.M.C.A. work and back into the Congregational ministry. The urge to write was always with him. His first book, published at his own expense, was a "worst" seller. But he kept writing and at last won out. Wealth and renown came but illness in his family always took the edge off his triumphs. After his wife died in 1944 he wrote his last fiction, "The Big Fisherman" and finally "Time to Remember," the beginning of his biography. He died in 1951 and his daughters dedicated themselves to completing the biography. And that book is "Shape of Sunday." Full of humor, well written, worth reading.—*Amos John Traver, Hamma Divinity School, Springfield, O.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No Star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

January	February	This Month	*An analysis based on reports from leading religious booksellers and from the reading of the Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.*
4	2	1	**Your God is Too Small.** *J. B. Phillips. Macmillan,* $1.75
1	1	2	**An Autobiography of Prayer.** *Albert E. Day. Harper,* $2.50
3	5	3	**Rediscovering Jesus.** *Jack Finegan. Association Press,* $2.50
8	7	4	**The Interpreter's Bible.** *Vol. 1. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $8.75
6	6	5	**This is the Church.** *Anders Nygren. Muhlenberg,* $4.75
2	4	6	**Marching Off the Map.** *Halford E. Luccock. Harper,* $2.50
9	8	7	**Fulfill Thy Ministry.** *C. S. Neill. Harper,* $2.00
10	9	8	**Joyous Adventure.** *David A. McLennan. Harper,* $2.50
		9	**Ride the Wild Horses.** *J. Wallace Hamilton. Revell,* $2.50
		10	**Citizens of the World.** *Stringfellow Barr. Doubleday,* $3.00

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE COUNTRY had voted overwhelmingly for a change, but the character of the change could not be known until the new President spoke to Congress. We now know that the new pilot intends to set the ship of state upon a new course.

The New Pilot Sets His Course

He could not abruptly reverse the nation's 20-year course. Commitments had been made and hostages given to fortune. Mr. Eisenhower must begin where the Roosevelt-Truman regime left off. But his address to Congress showed that a different type of mind is now in charge. His request for congressional repudiation of the secret treaties—Yalta and Potsdam—met with an instantaneous explosion of approval. His announcement that foreign aid would be conditioned upon the achievement of an effective union of western Europe marked the passing of an era of profligate sentimentalism and the beginning of an era of international self-respect. His order to lift the naval blockade of Formosa and the China coast was the first step in a new policy to end the intolerable stalemate in Korea. In his discussion of domestic economy, one could not miss the reappearance of a vocabulary long unused in our state papers: "economic law," "competitive enterprise," "competitive prices," "free market," "individual initiative." Such terms had been shelved by the adoption of the Keynesian philosophy of prosperity by government spending, with unconcern for the size of the public debt because, forsooth, "we owe it to ourselves." Mr. Eisenhower spoke of the national debt with grave concern. At long last we listened again to a presidential address whose dignity of spirit and style matched the dignity of the high office.

The Book of the Month

HENRY DRUMMOND, AN ANTHOLOGY. *Edited and with the story of his life by James W. Kennedy. Harper, $3.00.*

THIS BOOK set grateful bells ringing in my memory, for it was Henry Drummond's *Ascent of Man* that turned my mind upside down in the space of one week. When his Lowell Lectures appeared I was a college sophomore and a student preacher with firm convictions against "evolution" and the "higher criticism." I thought their acceptance would undermine Christianity. On a certain Sunday, I preached a sermon on "The Dignity of Man" and showed how the evolutionary theory cast man down from the eminence which the book of Genesis assigned him. Returning to school on Monday, I got into an argument with a fellow student over the matter. He urged me to read a book which he would borrow from the pastor of the college church. Reluctantly, but in fairness, I said I would. That book was a revelation. Its effect upon me was little short of a conversion. I then read *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* and the most famous of Drummond's works, *The Greatest Thing in the World.* When, fifteen years later, I was a delegate to the historic World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, I took time off to visit Stirling and pay homage to Henry Drummond at his modest grave. In Dr. Kennedy's book, following a 50-page biography, we have the best of Drummond's thought. The religious problems of college youth today are much the same as those to which this science-minded Christian believer addressed his illuminating answers.

A Thought for the Month

IN THE ATTEMPT to make our religion palatable to the modern mind we are in danger of seriously diluting the Christian faith. (1) The liberalism of the early 20th century tended to reduce Christianity to the ethical teaching and example of Jesus, thus virtually discarding the faith which his life, death and resurrection had created in the community of his first disciples. So Christianity was diluted into simple moralism. (2) In our time, it is popular to speak more about "religion" than about Christianity. We need religion, it is said, to preserve civilization, to cure our neuroses, to bring peace of mind, and so forth. "One religion is as good as another if only you live up to it"—this is the tacit implication in this way of thinking. (3) A popular device, used not so much for diluting as for escaping the claims of any religion whatever, is to substitute for it a "philosophy of life." (4) The Christian faith as held by Protestantism is being watered down by a sentimental tolerance. Protestants are the chief victims of an organized interfaith movement under the banner of "brotherhood." It has actually succeeded in establishing under its sponsorship an annual "Brotherhood Week," observed nationally by Protestants and liberal Jews with a bare token recognition by Roman Catholicism. This movement appeals especially to businessmen and political leaders, both churchmen and nonchurchmen, who have their own reasons for cultivating interfaith indifferentism. The effect, if not the purpose, of this movement is to dilute the Protestant witness. (5) Finally, consider the lowering of the threshold of entrance into many of our churches to a point hardly above the secular level. A church membership so recruited can hardly maintain the integrity of the Christian faith.

The Dilution of the Christian Faith

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

GOODBYES never come easy for me. This particular note of farewell is even more difficult than most to write. However, this is the last issue of The Pulpit which will carry my name on its masthead and I covet this chance to write, for the record, my deep and abiding belief in the mission of this magazine, my great appreciation for the strong backing and helpful assistance of thousands of Pulpit subscribers, and the cooperation and counsel of my colleagues on the editorial staff.

When Paul Hutchinson reads that first paragraph with all those adjectives he will conclude that it is just as well that I am saying goodbye—that his efforts to make an editor of me have failed miserably. He will know, though, that they are adjectives that come from the heart, for he and everybody else at the Christian Century Foundation knows that my first love among the three publications I have helped edit is The Pulpit.

I wish I had the strength to continue this job. I simply do not. For a year now I have worked on this editorial task after 12-hour days at my new and demanding job as executive vice president of the American Friends of the Middle East. When first a group of prominent American citizens asked me to undertake the leadership of an all-out effort to stop the deterioration of American relationships in the Middle East, to try to refill the reservoir of good will which has drained almost dry in that area, I thought that whatever contribution I could make would take not more than a year. The Foundation kindly granted me a leave of absence. Now I know that the situation is so serious and complicated that this first year's work has just begun the long job that some of us must do if peace is to be maintained or victory won should, God forbid, another war come. With reluctance and regret, I must—for a while at least—lay down my editorial task.

Fortunately, the man to whom responsibility for the Pulpit's editing passes has already proved himself capable of carrying on—indeed, of improving—the magazine. Alton Motter has long been both a personal friend and an editorial consultant. For some months now he has helped me do the job. In his hands The Pulpit will continue to develop and grow.

What we have hoped for the new Pulpit is far from fully accomplished, but we have come far. To all of you who have helped me dream it and bring it into being; especially to Charles Clayton Morrison, Paul Hutchinson and Harold Fey; to Cecelia Gaul, Robert L. Willett and Leonard Meyer; and to you the real editors whose proxy I have been proud to be—to all of you: thanks. And to Alton Motter: good luck and smooth sailing!

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A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Founded 1929

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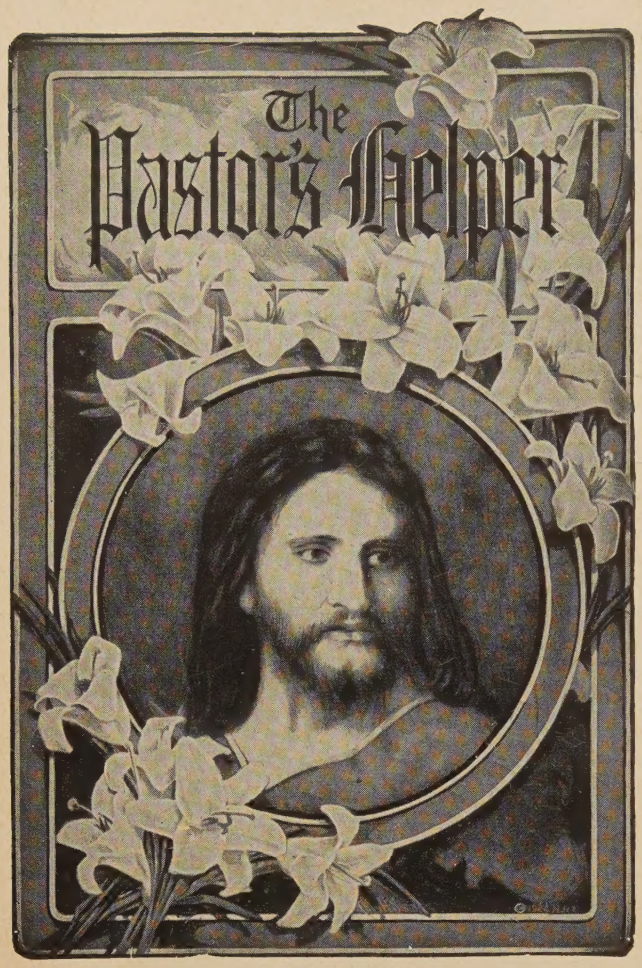
The Pulpit is a service publication of the Christian Century Foundation. Signed contributions do not necessarily represent the views of The Pulpit. Contributions should be typewritten, double spaced and addressed to The Pulpit, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5. Include return postage. Price per copy, 30 cents. Subscription rate, U. S. A. and Canada, $3.00 a year; foreign, $3.35.



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